AN EASY WAY TO EARN £100. (SEE PAGE 743.)


# SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 367. FOR WEEK ENDING JANUARY 11TH, 1896. [ONE PENNY.



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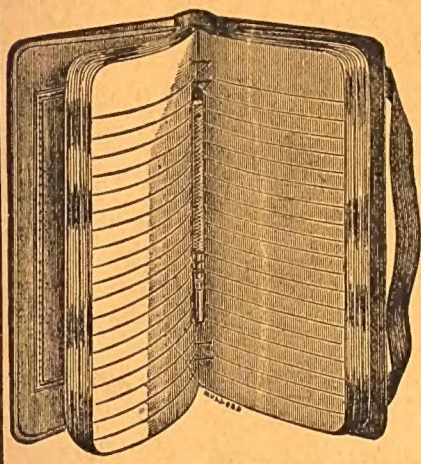

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# SHORT STORIES

Edited by C. Arthur Pearson.

No. 367.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week Ending January 11th, 1896.

## THE SPY'S FATE.

THE bed was comfortable enough to invite repose, but although the solitary occupant of the chamber—a travel-stained, weary looking man—had thrown himself down upon it shortly after the door had been closed upon him, and locked on the outside, he had not remained above a few minutes when he got up again and commenced pacing up and down the room.

Wearing the dress of a farm labourer, there was, nevertheless, a something about him which seemed to imply that he had not long since been through a course of military training, his figure being well-set up. There was, too, a general erectness about him which was out of keeping with the clothes he wore.

He was, as a matter of fact, one of the smartest troopers in the Confederate Army, and the disguise he had temporarily assumed had been suggested by him to his commanding officer as the best means by which he might, if lucky, obtain some important information as to the enemy's movements, which could only be gained by passing through the Federal lines.

A universal favourite with officers and men alike, the former had pointed out to him the risk he would incur, and it was only when his captain found that nothing would turn him from his resolve, that he reluctantly gave him permission to make the attempt.

"Is there any letter you would like me to forward to your people, in case you should be—get taken prisoner?"

"In case I should be shot sir, you mean. The bitter feud between North and South does not admit of much ceremony being shown towards spies, I fancy, on either side."

"You are a brave man, Jamieson, and have proved yourself a good soldier more than once; I earnestly hope you may get through the job all right."

"Thank you, sir, I'll do my best, and the boys shan't have cause to be ashamed of me, I promise you."

That same night, Trooper Jamieson set out on his dangerous mission, and succeeded in making his way through the Federal Lines, thanks to his intimate knowledge of the country; and was within measurable distance of safety again, when he was unlucky enough to fall in with a small cavalry patrol on outpost duty, the non-com. officer in charge of which being struck with the soldier-like bearing of the wandering farm labourer, ordered his men to search him, with a result that more than justified his suspicions, and brought to light papers of such importance that the captor felt his speedy promotion was assured.

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With hands closely bound, he had been placed on horseback, a trooper riding on either side of him, each carrying a loaded Colt's revolver ready to fire should the prisoner show any intention of attempting to escape.

In less than half an hour the escort and prisoner had arrived at the temporary headquarters of the detachment to which the former belonged, a substantial Virginian farm-house which had been temporarily transformed into a barracks, the owner having gone to fight in Lee's Army.

The subsequent proceedings were extremely brief; the prisoner had been taken before the officer in command, the sergeant had made his report, and "To be shot at daybreak" was the order given.

This was several hours ago, and the prisoner had for some time been walking up and down the spacious bedroom referred to at the commencement of this story.

On the table in the middle of the room a lamp was burning brightly, and a supply of writing paper and materials had been set out on it, being the room next adjoining the officer's bedroom, and which in ordinary times he used for writing dispatches and reports, etc.

"Geof promised me she should get it, and he will keep his word, I know. I wouldn't like her to have it from anybody else—poor old mother!

"Now, what shall I tell her? Shall I say I was out on patrol duty? or shall I tell her the truth? Better tell her all about it; she shall never say I died with a lie on my lips—and, after all, why shouldn't I tell her? I have done nothing to be ashamed of. All's fair in love and war. Poor Louie, I wonder if she will fret much—I wonder—bah! time is getting on, and they said six o'clock—only three hours more. Now for it:

"My DEAREST MOTHER,—At the moment I write this I have exactly three hours to live. I am to be shot at daybreak, and my brother Geoffrey, who is in the next room, will give the order to fire. 'Geoffrey!' you say, as you read this—it's true; I am his prisoner, and when I tell you all, your heart will go out to him as it never did before.

"I know you felt hardly against him when he went away, five years ago, and never sent a line to say whether he was dead or alive. He tells me he did write, though, and often wondered why you never replied, but he knows now that the letters never reached you. He will tell you all about it when the war is over, for he means to come home, and stay on the farm for good.

"But how came I to be Geoffrey's prisoner? I can hear you say. Well, when I last wrote I told you I had taken service in Stewart's Cavalry, and the General of our division having been very anxious for some time to obtain certain information, which could only be gained by some one who was thoroughly well acquainted with the country making his way through the Federal lines, I felt there was not a man in the corps so well fitted for the task as I was. So I volunteered for the duty, and having disguised myself as a farm labourer, got through all right, found out what I wanted to, and was making my way back to our camp, congratulating myself on my good fortune, when just as I was within measurable distance of Southern territory, I came across a small patrol of Northern cavalry, was arrested on suspicion—searched. The papers I had risked my life for being found upon me, left no doubt as to my identity, and in less than half an hour I found myself in the presence of Geoffrey—Captain Geoffrey Jamieson of the Federal Army. I didn't know, of course, any more than you did that he had taken service in the Northern Army, but I knew him in a minute; he did not recognise me I saw, but when I spoke he started, seemed to be thinking, and then suddenly I realised he knew it was me. I don't think his men noticed anything out of the way in his manner, and I was glad of that. He asked me if I had anything to say, why I should not be treated as a spy, and shot; and I said I had not, and he never winced, mother, although I could see he could hardly control himself.

"'I will give you one chance,' he continued, in as calm a tone as if he had never seen me in his life, 'and I would remind you that for the sake of your parents (if they are living),' he said, as if he would divine my thoughts, 'you should consider them before yourself. Your first duty is to them. If you can give me any information as to the disposition of the Southern Forces, your life will be spared, and my men shall see you safely across our lines. What do you say?'

"'I have a mother living,' I replied, 'but she would rather a son of hers died doing his duty as I have done than save his life at the expense of his honour. I can give you no information. I have done my duty to the best of my ability. It only remains for you to do yours, Captain.'

"'You refuse my offer, then?'

"'I do, sir.'

"'Very well, then. Sergeant, take your men outside; I will summon you presently.'

"The sergeant saluted, and retired.

"As soon as the door was closed, Geoffrey came across to where I was standing and gripped my hand silently.

"'Arthur!'

"'Geof!'

"'I didn't know you at first, but your voice is the same as it used to be.'

"'I saw you recognised me; I hoped you would not.'

"And then we talked, Geof and I, of you, mother, and the old place, and never a word of what was in both our minds. At last he said: 'You won't split, Arthur, I know that; and'—with the old pride in his voice—'I won't ask you to.'

"'Thank you for that, Geof.'

"'I would let you go, Arthur, this very minute if I dared; but I dare not, they would shoot me for mutiny.'

"'I reckon that's so.'

"'I am not afraid to die, Arthur, but it is the disgrace of it. Look here—you take my revolver—make a bit of a fuss—take it and shoot me—do you hear? Shoot me—here—here'—pointing to his heart—'that door isn't locked—there is only the sergeant and two men outside. My revolver is loaded in all six chambers, you will have five shots left. My mare is waiting for me down in the courtyard. She is faster than any horse my men have. You can get away. Do you see? Quick, man—here it is!' He paused, expecting me to reply.

"'Geof,' I said, 'you have got to see this thing through, and the sooner the better. If you had been in my place I should have done my duty just as you must do yours. I have played for a big stake and lost it. Supposing I was coward enough to do as you suggest, what good would it be, do you think? I could never look the dear old mother in the face again, feeling I had killed you to save myself. No—a thousand times no!

"'Shake hands, Geof. God bless you! Tell her I did my duty, or maybe you'd let me write her a bit of a letter, she would take it kind-like coming from me. You will see she gets it, won't you?'

"Geof said nothing, but he just gripped my hand like a vice. He's good grit, Geof is, and worth a dozen of

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me, mother. Then he went to the door and called the sergeant in.

"'I have endeavoured to get the prisoner to divulge the information I require, but he has refused. You will therefore arrange for him to be shot at daybreak. Say six o'clock a.m. Put him in the room next my bedroom, and let him be supplied with a light and writing materials.'"

Here the letter broke off suddenly; when it recommenced the handwriting was not so firm as it had been.

"When I began this letter I told you my room, the one I am writing this in, is next to Geof's bedroom. Soon after they had placed me here I heard him come into his, but he did not lie down, he walked up and down like I did at first, and then all was quiet. He had gone to sleep after all, then—fancy going to sleep!—and yet I dare say he was tired out, and he gave me a chance, you see. Presently I heard a door open quietly, and Geof came in here. He had taken his boots off, that was why I had not heard him moving. He held his finger up for me to be silent, and then said in a whisper: 'Take your boots off, and follow me.'

"Something in his manner made me do as he said. He always had a masterful way with him, you remember.

"When I got into his own room, he said: 'If you go down that passage at the end of your room, what looks like a cupboard by the side of the bed is, I found out the other day, a second doorway—none of my men know it—you will find a suit of uniform of mine, and my big cloak; I want you to put them on and pass yourself off as me. I always go and visit the sentries at about four o'clock or half-past. You and I are just about the same build and size, our voices are sufficiently alike, and as it is a cool night, you can button the cloak close up round your neck, and by pulling your cap well down, your face will be concealed. The password is Andromeda. Once you get clear of the last sentry, you know your way better than I can tell you. Now go, Arthur, and God bless you! Tell the dear old mother she had no reason to be ashamed of either of us. Give me your hand, Arthur—there, that's off my mind, and now I can go to sleep.' I wanted to stop, but Geof said no, and as gently as a woman pushed me back into this room.

"I have been in the passage and seen the uniform, and, God help me, mother, I took it up, touched it, and I felt like a murderer. I can't do it—I can't do it, and yet it is hard to die; and Geof meant it, I know he did—if only he could get away too—if only he could; he can—he shall.

* * * * *

"I have been to see him, mother, to tell him of a wild, mad scheme that had suggested itself to me, but he was asleep, fast asleep, and such a happy peaceful look upon his face, as if he were dreaming of you, and how you would bless him when you knew all. I could not find it in my heart to wake him, for, after all, the plan that suggested itself to me doesn't seem really feasible. One of us must die."

* * * * *

The old clock in the stable yard chimed out half-past four—the sentries had been on the alert for half an hour past, expecting the customary visit, but no officer came. The lamp in the prisoner's room was growing dimmer. He must make haste if he was going to finish his letter. He sat thinking deeply, pen in hand, and then a sudden resolve seemed to come upon him—what right had he to do this thing—the temptation was great, greater he felt than he could well overcome, but with firm and unhesitating footsteps he walked to the door leading to the passage.

Geof had told him to lock it on the *far* side he remembered. Yes, there was the key, right enough. His hand did not tremble as he withdrew it from the lock and having re-entered the bedroom and closed the door quietly he locked it, not as Geoffrey had told him, on the *outside*, but on the *inside*. The window was open a few inches, sufficiently to allow him to put his hand out, and as he heard the key drop on the turf beneath, he gave a sigh of relief.

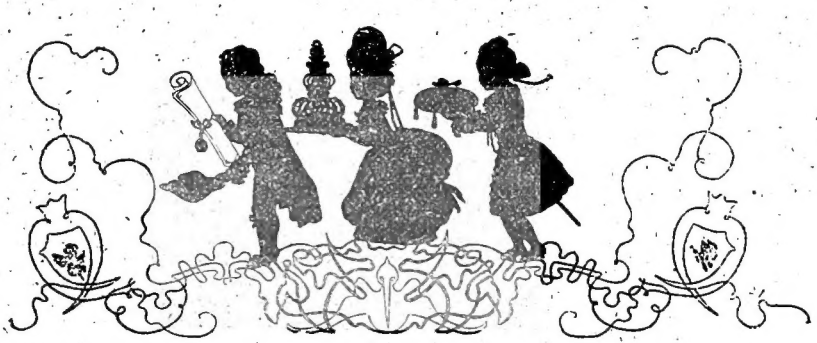
"Thank God for that," he ejaculated. "God bless you, Geof."

The lamp was growing gradually dimmer, but enough flame remained for his purpose; holding the letter he had been at so much trouble to write, towards it, in a few seconds nothing remained but a little heap of charred paper. And then, overwrought by the strain of what he had gone through, he threw himself down on the bed, and slept.

* * * * *

At the close of the war one son was restored to his mother, but the fate of the other has mercifully never been revealed to her.

PETER PARR.



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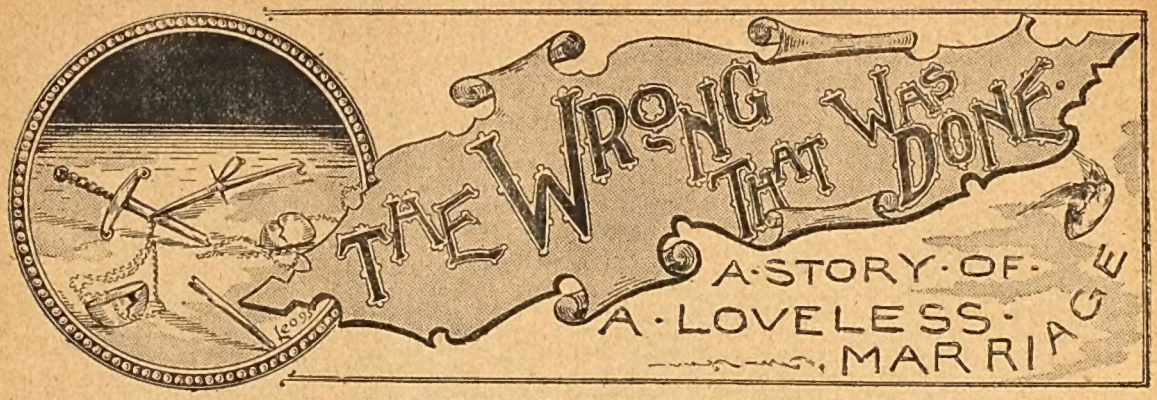


By E. C. WAGGENER.

SUMMARY.

Colonel Beverly and his step-daughter, Helen, between whom there is little love, are living together at Looe. After a long absence, Helen's sister, Kitty, returns home. She discovers that Helen fancies herself deeply in love with Gifford Vane, to whom she herself was engaged five years ago, but has not seen him since. After several weeks Kitty determines to leave Looe. Gifford Vane again proposes to her, but, for the sake of Helen, she refuses him.

## CHAPTER VI.

They had not long been married. Helen came out of the little white cottage and walked quickly down to the gate, where she stood for a few minutes, looking up and down the long dusty street. Then, with a faint sigh, she went back to the house, her step a trifle slow, a little frown of vexation, or anxiety, it was impossible to tell which, on her face.

She had just time to put away her broom and straighten the folds of the snowy table-cloth, which had gone awry, when the sharp click of the gate was heard, and the next moment Gifford came in, looking flushed and tired. She ran for a chair, which she drew close to the window, and into whose comfortable depths he sank with a sigh of relief.

"Are you very tired this evening, Gifford?" she asked, leaning tenderly over his chair. "And what made you so late? Were you too busy to come home earlier?"

"I wish you wouldn't ask me so many questions all in one breath," he said impatiently. "Is supper ready?"—with a hasty glance at the table.

"Yes; I was only waiting for you to come," she answered brightly, as she hastened to pour out the tea.

"Why don't you open some of your windows?" he asked, as he drew his chair up to the table and helped himself to a piece of cold chicken. "It's so confounded hot in here I wonder you can stand it."

"The wind was blowing the dust in from the street," she said; yet she ran and opened both windows. "Maybe you are warm from walking so fast," she added as she came back to the table.

"I don't think I walked any faster than usual," he retorted a little crossly. "Helen"—looking up at her with a frown—"I do wish you'd leave off wearing your hair in that ridiculous fashion. You look like an old woman of sixty."

"I thought you admired it this way," she said timidly, a look of pain and surprise in her gentle eyes. "Which way *do* you like it best?"

"Any way that suits you," he answered with sudden indifference that hurt her far more than his fault-finding had done. Then, as if he already regretted his hasty words, he left his chair and came over to where she sat.

"Don't mind it if I'm out of sorts," he said, kissing her with unusual tenderness. "I ought to be more lover-like in my ways to suit an affectionate little woman like you," he added as her arms stole round his neck, "but when a man marries he doesn't expect to spend his whole time in love-making."

"I don't expect it," said Helen smiling, and yet with tears shining in her eyes. "But sometimes you are not a bit like you used to be—I mean before we were married."

"I must have changed quite suddenly," he said laughing at her solemn face, "for we haven't been married quite three months yet, have we?"

"No. And yet"—with a heavy sigh—"you have found fault with me more than a dozen times."

"Have I? Well, if I did it was for your own good. Why do you parade your ignorance so often, and before my best friends too? Now, the other day, when Hunt ran in on us so unexpectedly, I was sure you would do your best to appear at your ease. But instead I think you tried to show off your ignorance as much as possible. And Bob has such a horror of a common-place woman."

"Indeed, I did try my best to entertain him," said Helen excitedly, "but what *could* I say when he talked about people I had never seen?"

"I know you made a dozen ridiculous blunders when you did talk. And there was no need of your telling him that you had never been outside of Looe in your life."

"I was sorry the moment I told him that, for I saw from your face that you were angry. But, Gifford, why should you be so sensitive about it? It's not my fault that I know so little. Father never would send me off to school ——"

"I know," interrupted Gifford roughly, "but a man doesn't expect to have to educate his wife. It's asking a little too much, I think. And the woman who expects it expects too much."

Gifford certainly meant to make Helen happy when he asked her to marry him. Whether he was actuated by pity, or petty spite towards Kitty, or whether his nobler, better nature prompted him to fulfil his half-spoken promises to Helen—whatever his reasons, he certainly meant to be kind and gentle towards her always. And they were both very happy and contented the first few weeks, he realising more and more every day what a treasure he had won, she content to worship him in a fierce, idolatrous way, without seeming to notice the absence of any great tenderness on his part. Her nature was so sweet and affectionate, so free from jealousy and selfishness, that he told himself in those first quiet days that he had done what was right and best, after all.

But a month or two of close companionship revealed her ignorance and simplicity so plainly as to arouse a spirit of antagonism within him which he tried in vain to repress. Before their marriage her little blunders had made her charming in his eyes; because in her innocence and simplicity she was unlike any other woman he had ever seen. But then he had not the opportunities to notice her ignorance that he had afterwards; and when it became more apparent every day, he was at first annoyed, then ashamed, and at last angry with her for the little tricks of speech and ludicrous blunders that any other man less

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proud and sensitive would have scarcely noticed, or would at least have quietly corrected or ignored.

Helen felt the bitterness of the old vague doubts and fears again; felt, in an undefined way, that her marriage was very different from marriages contracted by men and women who were deeply in love with each other. Not that she believed her husband had ceased to care for her—he had given her no cause to think that; he had simply grown a little careless and indifferent. But it was his indifference, his lack of tenderness, that hurt her.

Poor, deluded Helen! It was well for her peace of mind that she could not read in her husband's face—the face that was fast losing its hopeful, boyish look—the secret regret that was making life hateful to him. It was well for her that she did not know of the bitter rebellion in his heart, or that remorse was poisoning every moment of his existence.

He wanted to do right, he wanted to make Helen happy, and he tried very earnestly to forget the past; but there were times when a great longing for the sight of Kitty's face, the sound of her voice, and the touch of her hand, rose up in his heart and half maddened him. Yet he seldom spoke of her, and gave Helen very little encouragement to speak of her, though he avoided the subject in such an innocent, natural way that she had not the least idea he avoided it purposely.

* * * * *

There was a knock at the front door. Helen herself went to answer it. She was surprised and delighted to find it was their old friend, John Eastman, who had run in to pay them a surprise visit.

It was a merry little party of three that gathered about the table a few minutes later.

"Why, I shall begin to think seriously of getting married myself," John remarked, when she had helped him to a third slice of cake.

She blushed a little, and looked across the table at Gifford, who had suddenly become absorbed in studying the pattern on a plate before him.

"I suppose every man thinks of getting married at some time in his life," she said, breaking a somewhat awkward silence. "Or at least they ought to think about it, if they don't," she added quite soberly.

"Oh, yes; most fellows contemplate matrimony before they are out of their teens," said John lightly. "And"—with a quick glance at her serene face—"the majority of them have a half-dozen love affairs before they settle down to the right one at last. Why, I have imagined myself desperately in love several times since I left Mallingford, but somehow I always got over my fancy without any serious injury to my heart. It was always a blow to my pride, though, to get 'no' for an answer. Love's a queer thing. Here's Gifford, who pretended that he was deeply in love with—"

"Let Helen help you to some more strawberries," interrupted Gifford, looking across the table at his friend with a flush on his face. "They grew in her garden, and are unusually fine for the season."

"I don't think I've slighted them, for I've been helped twice," said John, laughing a little uneasily, for he realised in a dim way that he was on dangerous ground.

When they left the table a few minutes later Gifford led the way to the verandah, leaving Helen to follow at her leisure. Lighting cigars, the two seated themselves on comfortable chairs under the window.

To-night Gifford felt a sense of comfort and rest which he had not experienced for many months, and the conversation drifted from common-place remarks about the village and its people to the old college days, when the two were such steadfast friends and comrades.

"We were both very ambitious in those days, weren't we?" said John in a musing tone. "Yet neither of us has managed to make a great stir in the world."

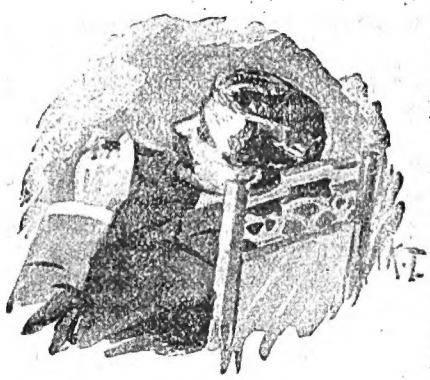
"No," returned Gifford a little absently; and then a long silence fell between them.

"I'm afraid," remarked John suddenly, "that I touched on a forbidden subject a little while ago, but the fact is you owe me an explanation. You assured me over and over again that you and Helen were simply good friends, and led me to make a fool of myself when you might have been honest enough to have told me the truth, and saved me the mortification of a refusal. I was sure, too, that you cared for Kitty."

"I did," said Gifford, his voice husky with some sudden emotion. "I loved her better than my life, and I believed, and believe yet, that she cared for me."

"Then, by Jove! what made you act as you did? Why didn't you marry her? If you were so sure of her love, what prevented you from proposing to her?"

"I don't care to further discuss the subject," said Gifford with sudden reserve, half angry with himself for being betrayed into speaking of something he had mentally resolved should never be recalled.



*Lighting cigars.*

"I think I understand," and John smiled a little bitterly as he threw away his half-smoked cigar. "Kitty refused you, so you consoled yourself with Helen. And now you want to keep close about it. Well, I don't think you could have done better, though it was hardly fair to Helen. And *I* did care for her very much. You are, I feel, free to speak about it now. It is all over, you know, and we are good friends again. And you might tell me more, seeing I have quite got over my folly. Of course, Helen doesn't know that you cared for her sister, does she?"

"No," said Gifford hastily. "A man is a fool who would speak of such things to his wife, for the best of women are not free from jealousy, and Helen has her share, though I have never given her much cause to show it—at least, not since we were married. It would be very foolish to rake up the past, and I don't intend that Helen shall ever know anything about it. Of course, you think it rather strange that I married her, after protesting that we were only good friends, and all that sort of thing, but there is a little story connected with it that I am bound to honour to keep secret, even at the risk of your thinking ill of me. I'll say this much, however, that while I will never love another woman as I loved Kitty North, I know I am not half good enough for Helen. I realise it more and more every day of my life."

"You need somebody to scold and lecture you every now and then, and Helen is too soft hearted for that," said John, as he lighted a fresh cigar. "And too fond of you perhaps," he added gravely.

"Yes, there's the trouble. She's too fond of me. And she's too intense. John," he added, in a sudden burst of confidence, "whatever you do, don't marry a woman you can't love. Don't cheat yourself into the belief that love will come in time, for it won't."

"There is no prospect of my marrying anyone just at present, and sometimes I'm afraid I'm doomed to remain an old bachelor all the days of my life. I've never yet found the woman who was willing to become Mrs. Eastman."

Just then footsteps sounded in the hall, and presently Helen came out and joined them. She appeared not to notice the chair John hastened to offer her, but stood

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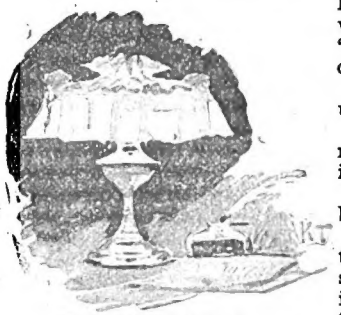
leaning against a pillar of the porch, looking a little ghostly in the darkness, in her white dress and the fleecy scarf she had wound about her dark hair.

"Couldn't we have a little music?" suggested Eastman. "Gifford, you haven't forgotten how to sing, I know; so get your guitar and favour us with something for the sake of old times."

"I've forgotten everything I used to know, and my voice has grown cracked and weak," protested Gifford. "You really will have to excuse me."



*He had lighted the lamp.*

"Then Helen must give us——"

"You forget that I have no accomplishments," put in Helen, a little stiffly. "So I, too, must beg to be excused."

"By the way, what is the time?" asked John, striking a match and trying to look at his watch. "My train is due at nine o'clock. It's almost that now," he added, as he closed his watch and rose from his chair. "How the hours have flown! Why, I haven't had a chance to say half I wanted to say. But I mean to run up here often—that is, if you'll let me. Gifford, can't you throw off your lazy fit and walk over to the station with me?"

Gifford rose with alacrity, and went into the hall for his hat. "I won't keep him any longer than I can help," said Eastman, as he bade Helen good-bye. "Will you be afraid to stay here alone?"

"Certainly not. I have grown very brave of late," she answered, with a laugh that sounded a little forced and unnatural.

## CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Gifford came back, an hour later, he found Helen still standing on the verandah, and it struck him that there was something a little singular in her attitude.

"Why didn't you go in and light the lamp?" he asked, pausing for a second on the steps. "Were you afraid of the dark? Or were you enjoying the starlight?"

"I wasn't at all afraid, and I don't think I noticed the stars," she answered shortly, as she followed him in and stopped to bolt and lock the hall-door.

He had lighted the lamp when she came into the sitting-room, and he turned and looked at her keenly, a sudden, unaccountable fear in his mind.

"What is the matter?" he asked quickly. "Why, you are as pale as death, child!"

Then all the pent-up agony of the past two hours burst forth in a torrent of passionate words.

"I heard what you said out yonder," she cried in a choked voice—"you and John. I didn't intend to listen. I went to the window and sat down because I was tired, and wanted to rest a little. I did *not* mean to listen to what you were talking about, I want you to understand that. But I heard every word you said.—Are you listening to me?—Every single word you said!"

"Well," and his face betrayed nothing.

His apparent coolness and indifference staggered her for a moment, then her fury burst forth again.

"It was mean and cruel of you to deceive me so—mean and cowardly and cruel! Oh, how blind I have been not to see that you never cared for me! But now that my eyes are opened to the truth, I can understand a great many things that have puzzled me at times. Yet I want to say that I never once thought you cared for Kitty, or she for you. You treated her coldly; you gave me very little reason to believe that you even liked her, and she kept the truth from me. It was a cowardly thing to do, and I hate you both! And I will never forgive either of you, never, as long as I live."

"Listen a moment, Helen," he said, all his seeming indifference vanishing before the look of misery in her face. "Suppose I *did* love Kitty; you and I are married now, so don't you think it would be the wisest and best plan to forget the past?"

"Don't ask me such a question, after what I have heard to-night!" she exclaimed passionately. "I tell you I hate you—hate you just as much as I loved you two hours ago! And I'll never forgive you as long as I live; you can't expect it, you needn't expect it. Oh, what a wretched, wretched mistake it has been! Why didn't you tell me the truth in the beginning? Why, *why* did you marry me when you loved someone else?"

"Because you made such a fool of yourself about me," he answered, in sudden, bitter anger. "Heaven knows I married you against my will and better judgment, for I knew in the beginning that no happiness would ever come of such a marriage."

He was reckless of the effects of his words, for he felt in his heart that nothing he could do or say now would have power to alter her opinion of him or restore her confidence in him. "I have been living a lie long enough," he added, "and am rather glad, after all, that you know the truth at last."

He was scarcely conscious of his cruel, brutal words. He

*Her face was turned persistently towards the window.*

only felt a sense of freedom and relief in the thought that he was throwing prudence to the winds, and putting himself in a position to shake off for ever the hateful chains that fettered him.

"Then you needn't live a lie any longer," she said, her voice firm, and clear, and sweet. "You can go away anywhere—*anywhere*, just so I may never look upon your face again. God may forgive you for the wrong you have done me—*I* never will!"

"Helen, you don't mean all you have said," he pleaded, his better nature struggling for mastery. "I am not wholly to blame in this matter, and if you will let me explain——"

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"I don't want you to explain anything," she interrupted, her anger flaming forth again. "I have heard quite enough. I can't forget your cruel words, and I want you to go away—to get out of my sight for ever. If *you* don't go, *I* will, for I will never live with you again."

"Are you in earnest?" he asked, his voice betraying none of the passion and pain and self-reproach he was feeling. "Do you really wish for a separation?"

"I do. Nothing could induce me to live with you another day, after what has been said to-night," she answered, her voice faltering a little. Then, as if she feared to trust herself to say more, she hastily crossed the room, and, opening the window-shutters, leant her hot, throbbing face in the cool night wind. He stood motionless in the middle of the room, looking with unconscious admiration at her silent figure.

"You say you hate me," he said at last; "but if you knew all, I think you would pity me a little, Helen. Not that I haven't done wrong, for I wronged you when I married you, loving your sister. But it is useless to waste words," he added bitterly. "I feel that you will never forgive me, so perhaps it will be best for me to go away. We certainly could never be happy together after this."

Helen was silent.

"I don't suppose you'll miss me much," he went on, with a short laugh. "You have plenty of friends here to pity you and help you to forget me. Then, I am not leaving you utterly destitute. This house is yours, besides the interest in your old home; so, on the whole, no doubt you'll get along better without me. Consult some of your friends as to your plans for the future. They are better able to advise you than I am. I shall take nothing with me except my books and a few articles of clothing. Everything else I leave in your hands to dispose of as you see proper. And, Helen"—coming a step nearer the motionless figure—"try to forget me and be happy, for I shall never trouble you again—be sure of that."

She turned and looked at him slowly, and he quailed before the scornful anger of her soft eyes.

"I have told you that I hate you," she said slowly. "What more can I say? Now go, and remember this, that, living or dead, I shall always despise you."

She turned to the window again and buried her face in her hands. Gifford went into the bedroom and packed some of his books and a few articles of clothing into a bag, performing these necessary preparations with feverish haste and with an utter disregard to neatness. When he had finished he came back into the sitting-room and stopped before her.

"I am going now," he said, his voice husky with some emotion, whether sorrow, or remorse, or gladness it was impossible to tell. "I have just time to catch the train. I don't suppose it makes any difference to you where I am going, and, in fact, I don't know myself. Are you afraid to stay here alone until morning?" he asked, as if the question were an afterthought.

"No, I'm not afraid," she answered, without turning her head. "The darkness and loneliness won't be half so terrible to me as your presence would be."

"Then you won't say good-bye?" he asked half bitterly, half intreatingly, as he paused in the door.

No answer. Her face was turned persistently towards the window. Had she been made of stone she could not have appeared more rigid and lifeless. Was this the woman who only a little while ago was all tenderness and love and passion? he asked himself wonderingly. Then he glanced at his watch, and while he made no motion towards going to the quiet figure, still he lingered in the doorway.

One, two, five minutes passed, and still no stir of the motionless form by the window.

With a little sigh he took up the heavy bag, put on his hat, and went out, closing the door softly behind him. Helen heard his quick footsteps on the gravelled path, saw him open the little gate, and watched him in the dim light of the dying moon until his figure was lost in the distance.

"I shall never see him again," she said to herself with a little sob. "Am I glad, or sorry, I wonder? Oh, how strange that last night I was so happy, and to-night we are parted for ever! Yet it is better so than to have kept on living together after what passed between us a little while ago—better this than to be compelled to live with a man who cares nothing for me. Ah! if I could only die! if I could only die!"

Yet her eyes were tearless, and she gave way to no noisy grief over this, the bitterest hour of her life.

After a little while she rose, closed the windows, saw that the doors were securely locked, and determined to go to bed. But not to sleep; that was impossible, when every nerve was tingling with pain and her heart beating almost to suffocation. What was this terrible loss that had come to her? she asked herself over and over again, as she lay there through the long hours of the lonesome night. What had she ever done to deserve this? Nothing, nothing, she told herself. And yet she had lost all that was worth living for.

*(To be continued.)*

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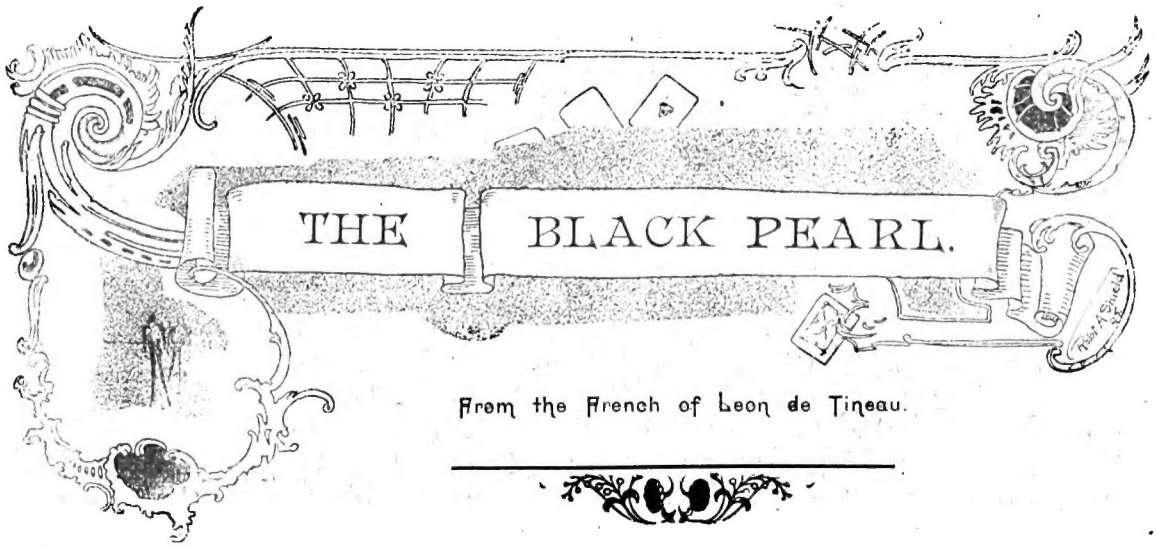

# THE BLACK PEARL.

From the French of Leon de Tinseau.

WHEN Parisians about the end of August talk of the "insufficiency of water in the capital," they amuse me. At Aden, on the Red Sea, a city of sixty thousand inhabitants, built on a promontory of lava, you could not, for all the gold of the Indies, find a blade of grass, a salad leaf, or a drop of water.

"But what becomes of the water which falls when it rains?" I asked my friend Pujol, the French Consul, who did the honours one day when I passed through Aden, on my way from China.

"When it rains the public cisterns fill themselves. But it is five years already since the natives have seen even a cloud in the sky."

"Then where did the water at our breakfast table this morning come from?"

"Oh, that came from the factory! The English distil the sea and sell to us an absolutely pure article imitated from Nature. The only objection to the artificial article is its ruinous cost. My water bill amounts to over a hundred francs a month; this, of course, includes my wife's baths, for she abhors salt water."

"Gracious! How then do the poor Arabs get along? They don't seem to have sixty louis a year to spend on their drink."

"They are satisfied with the water that the camels bring every day from the hills yonder, twenty-eight kilometres from here."

I jotted these facts down in my note-book, and we returned to the Consulate, where we were awaited by Madame Pujol, a pretty Marseillaise, whom I had met for the first time that morning. My friend had only lately married, and his wife was not in love with Aden. We talked of the country and its social resources. Madame Pujol told me with a sigh that her visiting list contained but two names—an old English woman, who could not speak two words of French, and the proprietress of the Hotel de l'Univers, a strapping French woman, more accustomed to haggle with Arabian merchants than to talk to a refined compatriot.

As I was pitying her dreary existence, Pujol exclaimed: "Now, my dear, don't dissimulate. Why do you hide the fact that you have an admirer in the Arabian quarter?"

The lady looked annoyed, and shrugged her shoulders.

"An admirer as black as your hat!" she exclaimed.

"Very black, but very handsome," insisted Pujol. "That makes a difference! And immensely rich—the wealthiest coffee merchant in Aden! That means the principal merchant of Mocha coffee. I will take you to see him to-morrow. You will be astonished at his luxurious way of living. He revels in costly carpets and ornaments. His house is a veritable bazaar. My wife spends hours there, and, if I didn't object, this excellent Mouloud would offer her all the treasures of his home, under pretext that its ornaments please the 'lady'."

"How you exaggerate!" said Madame Pujol, more and more vexed. "Don't believe that I make an intimate companion of this negro. Certainly I haven't been there for a fortnight."

"My wife is a little out of sorts," apologetically said the Consul, "because this morning she lost a valuable jewel."

"Indeed, I am inconsolable," she added. "I have vainly sought all day for a black pearl out of my ear-ring that my husband bought for me at Ceylon. By examining its mate you can judge of their beauty and value."

Closely looking at the ear-ring, I noticed Madame Pujol's well-shaped ear and the delicate perfume that emanated from her person. Soon after I went for a siesta on the roof of the house, according to the custom of the country.

The next day my friend and I went to the native quarters to visit "Madame Pujol's admirer." We were accompanied on our visit by a co-passenger and compatriot who was just finishing his tour round the world. He was what you call a *savant*, always taking notes, copying inscriptions, and addressing articles to the "Academy," whose correspondent he claimed to be. Mouloud ben Said, who speaks English like a city merchant, and who is a superb specimen of the Arab race, received us splendidly. Not only did he do the honours of his shop, but, what was still more interesting to us, of his home as well.

Towards the end of our visit we were served with coffee—that is to say, an odorous beverage resembling

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our product about as much as champagne does ginger ale, and which was accompanied by the inevitable *chibouk* and the pitcher of fresh water.

Water which has come seven leagues on a camel's back in leather bottles is not tempting, but I was parched with thirst, and, besides, I had tasted worse things in the rice plantations of lower China. Strange! This water had no taste of leather. Far from it. It was not perfectly limpid, but its taste was decidedly agreeable. It smelt—yes, it did smell of violets. Violets in the heart of Abyssinia! How strange!

The *savant* had made the same discovery as I had, for after having smelled, tasted, and swallowed, he asked me in academic tone: "Do you not notice a peculiar flavour about this water?"

"Yes," I answered, "that of violets."

"Exactly. Well, my dear sir, let me tell you that amid some of the coal strata in the earth there are certain products whose odour is analogous to that of the flower in question. Perfumers even used it to adulterate their extracts. I conclude that this water has come in contact with just such strata. A coal mine at Aden, sir. Think of it! Can you imagine such a stroke of luck? The smallest bit of coal burnt here comes from England."

Hereupon the *savant* deluged our host with questions as to the exact location of the spring whence the camels brought their daily load. He would have gone there immediately, notwithstanding the distance, but his steamer was to sail that night. He wanted at least to bottle a sample of this fragrant water to have it analysed at the Mining School. What astonished me most was to see the visible embarrassment that our discovery caused Mouloud ben Said.

Just before leaving I poured myself another tumbler of water, when I heard in my glass the click of a hard substance, and to my surprise found this to be a black pearl, the mate of the one which Madame Pujol had shown me the day before, and, now that I came to think of it, I recognised the perfume. How ridiculous this *savant* with his coal theory appeared to me, and my poor friend Pujol! What could I do? The superb Mouloud was watching me in a way I did not fancy, and the presence of the husband, the principally interested party, hampered me considerably in my investigation. I sadly thought that consular inviolability, though written in the laws of men, was evidently unknown to Arabs at Aden.

Whilst the *savant* was corking his bottle, I, under the pretext of pouring some water on my hands, succeeded without detection in obtaining possession of the pearl. I was determined to save something for Pujol. As we left the Arab's house, the mineralogist went immediately to the dock. I necessarily had to go to the Consulate to restore the pearl to madame. Luckily, Pujol let me return alone, as business with the captain called him on board the steamer.

"Before making my adieu, madame," I said in rather severe, yet calm tones, "permit me to restore to you this pearl."

She gave a cry of joy. "My pearl! How lucky! Where did you find it?"

"At Mouloud ben Said's," I answered, emphasising each syllable. "I found it there a short time ago. Thank goodness Pujol is ignorant of my discovery."

And as she looked at me with wide-open, astonished eyes. "I know nothing more," I continued with dignity, "and I want to know nothing. Useless to add, I shall act like a gentleman, and will speak to no one of this sad affair. Good-bye, madame!" I left the room almost without touching her hand, but showing all my indignation in a last look. I wanted her to know that at least she had not deceived me. I found my friend on board, and embraced him with an effusiveness that astonished him. Poor Pujol! An hour later I carried my secret far from Aden.

The other day I met Pujol and his wife on the boulevard. They seemed more tenderly attached than ever; the two black pearls again adorned the young woman's ears. We all dined together, and naturally talked about Aden.

"By-the-way," said the Consul, "you taxed our imaginations for a week by your lucky find at Mouloud's. Weren't you rather puzzled yourself?"

Just then I was more embarrassed than puzzled, and I muttered an answer that had neither rhyme nor reason.

"We found out, a week after your departure," explained Pujol, "that my servant had invented a singular plan to increase his perquisites. He resold to the Arabs the water which my wife used for her baths. We think the pearl must have fallen into the bath-tub and thus was taken to Mouloud ben Said's. How did you find it?"

"*Parbleu!* I came near swallowing it!" I exclaimed, glancing at the blushing Madame Pujol.

That did not prevent our *savant's* full account of the undiscovered coal pits of Aden from being read at the Academy of Sciences.

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# A LIVING INCUBUS.

WE were sitting smoking our cigars; my old friend the Doctor and I, in a bay window facing the sea, which was only divided from the house by the intervening roadway and a stout wall. My host had been telling me (and it was not difficult to believe him) that when the wind was on the land, and there was a big sea running, it was often practically impossible to proceed along the roadway in front of his house, or if anyone attempted to do so, they would be half drowned.

On this particular evening, however, the sea was in one of its quiescent moods and the suggestion that we should change and go for a row for an hour was unanimously agreed upon.

In a few minutes we were in a nice light rowing boat not so light and cockleshell-like in construction as those I had been used to on the Thames, but not sufficiently heavy to make rowing at all laborious, and roomy enough to accommodate a party of four or five persons. The tide was running out, which at this particular part of the coast means parallel with the land, and the strength of the current was sufficient to carry us along with a stroke of the oars now and then.

Gradually we drifted into a little cove to the westward of the town, which in days gone by had been a noted

*I gave him a cigar, and he subsided into my special arm-chair.*

place for smuggling, and I asked the Doctor if he had ever seen anything of it.

"No," he replied, "there was, I believe, 'a run' in this very cove a few years after I came here, but it has been discontinued for a great many years past. Do you see that wooden fencing at the top of the cliff to our right?"

"Yes; what of it?"

"Only this, that soon after I came here I very nearly lost my life at that spot, and after a good deal of trouble I induced the local authorities to erect a fence there."

"It looks a dangerous spot, certainly. How did it happen? Did you become dizzy or miss your footing?"

"Missed my footing, and if it had not been for the assistance of a man whose very presence had become a nightmare to my existence, I should most certainly have been dashed to pieces. If you like to take the oars and paddle back slowly—the tide has just turned, I see—I will tell you all about it."

We changed our positions in the boat and the Doctor began:

"It was just such another evening as this, I remember, and I was sitting at the open window of my house—not the present one, but one farther away from the centre of the town, and opposite what was then a small wooden jetty—when I saw a stranger walking aimlessly up and down. Something in the man's movements gave me the impression—I cannot say why—that he contemplated committing suicide, and I made up my mind to watch him.

"I had not long to wait, for after making two or three journeys from one end of the jetty to the other, on reaching the extreme end he either intentionally, or from a sudden feeling of faintness, lurched heavily from side to side, and in so doing overbalanced himself and fell into the water.

"I am, as you know, a good swimmer, and throwing my coat off as I went along, I was soon at the spot where he had disappeared, and plunged in. I could see nothing of him, but by diving where I judged he had gone down, was lucky enough to find him at the first attempt. I brought him to the surface, and had no difficulty in keeping him afloat until we were both picked up by a boatman who had seen me jump into the sea and lost no time in rowing out to discover what was wrong.

"The man, who had the appearance of a broken-down gentleman, apparently about thirty-five years of age, was quite unconscious, and my house being the nearer, the boatman and I between us carried him in, quickly removed his clothes, and by prompt measures soon succeeded in bringing him round.

"After a while I endeavoured to elicit who he was and where he came from, but his mind seemed to be a perfect blank, and so far as I could make out, he was totally unaware of the danger he had recently passed through. To my various questions he returned monosyllabic replies, and thinking he might be better after a

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good meal, I asked him to join me at dinner, an invitation which he accepted as if it were quite a matter of course, and not only did excellent justice to the good things my housekeeper had provided, but after dinner asked me (it was the first request he had made) if I had any cigars.

"I gave him one, and having subsided into my special arm-chair and made himself as much at home as if he had known me all his life—for the first time since we had been brought into such strange contact—a look of satisfied contentment was apparent on his face, as if he had at last found what he had been longing for.

"I am, as you know, fond of a good cigar, and those in question were particularly fine.

"The evening wore on, one cigar was followed by another, without a word being spoken between us, and I not unnaturally began to wonder as to how I was to induce him to take his departure.

"'I don't know whether you are staying in the town,' I remarked at last, 'or——'

"'I only arrived to-day, but I suppose I must stay on now; at least, you have decided that I must.'

"'I, my good fellow; what do you mean?'

"He looked at me in a dreamy way.

"'Why, I belong to you, don't I? You saved my life; you would not have done that if you had not wanted it; I had no further use for it, and intended, as I dare say you realised, to throw it away. You, for some reason best known to yourself, took possession of it. It must have been a close thing though, I fancy; I don't remember anything after the water went over me.'

"'My good man, I only did what any man would have done under the circumstances. You were in danger of being drowned; I am an expert swimmer—there was no danger to me in fishing you out—and——'

"'I don't think you quite realise the position,' he interposed. 'I did not ask you to fish me out; all I wanted was to rid myself of what is no earthly use to me—my life. Practically speaking, I threw it away—at least, I intended to. You picked it up; it is yours; you have the advantage; henceforth you have two lives—mine and your own. I relinquish all claim to it. I transfer my identity and the attendant responsibilities in the way of providing the necessary supply of food and clothing to you.'

"'You must be mad, surely!' I replied.

"'I think not; but, as a doctor, you should know best.'

"'Well, supposing I had not pulled you out, what then?'

"'Ah, but you did,' he said, with a chuckle. 'and you must have wanted my life to save it as you did.'

"'Good Heavens, man, don't you understand? I saved you from yourself; saved your life in order that I might give it back to you to make a better use of it in the future, I hope.' I said this in what I meant to be an impressive manner, but he was not by any means awed, unfortunately.

"'I didn't want my life given back; it is no good to me, and as you have taken it you must do what you like with it.'

"'Ha!' I said, 'you admit that?'

"'I do.'

"'Then if your life belongs to me absolutely, I can do what I like with it, without consulting you at all?'

"'That is my contention.'

"'Then'—in an exultant tone—'you can't swim; what is to stop me from pushing you into the sea and letting you drown as you want to?'

"'People would call that murder, wouldn't they?' he said quietly.

"'What about suicide, then?'

"'There is, I think you will admit, a distinction between the two.'

"'Confound you, what do you want?'

"'Nothing!'

"'Nothing?'

"'Not so far as I am concerned; for, as I have endeavoured to explain to you, I as an individual have ceased to exist, my individuality having become merged in yourself. Is it not nearly time we went to bed?'

"'You don't mean to say——'

"'Oh, no; any sort of a shakedown will do for me. I should like a glass of whiskey before I go, if you don't mind.'

"I complied with his request, and then rang the bell for my servant to show him his room.

"'At what time do you take breakfast, sir?' He was annoyingly humble all the time, I may remark.

"'Nine o'clock,' I replied, 'but it may be earlier to-morrow, as I have to go to London for the day.'

"'Will you require my attendance, sir?'

"The request was made in such a tone of quiet assurance that I felt myself powerless to make a suitable reply. After pausing awhile, he quietly withdrew.

"After he had gone, I sat down to think the thing out, but do what I would, I could not arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. Nobody would believe me if I told them the facts of the case.

"The next morning my self-imposed guest was down to breakfast before me, and greeted me quite cordially as I entered the room.

"During the meal neither of us spoke, but at its conclusion I announced that I was going to London for the day, and if on my return I found he had not gone, I should call in the police to remove him.

"'You are, of course, at liberty to do as you think fit; but you yourself brought me here, and as I have already explained here I am compelled to remain. I am helpless in the matter. Should the officers of the law remove me, I shall consider it my duty to resume my proper position at the earliest possible opportunity.

"'And what do you consider your proper position, may I ask?'

"'To place myself unreservedly at your disposal; I, or what was I, belong to you as I have already said. It seems useless to repeat the fact.'

"'My train is nearly due,' I replied, 'as I hastily prepared to go; but, mind you, if I find you here on my return I shall give you into custody.'

"To this threat he made no audible reply, but I fancied I could detect a grim chuckle of satisfaction. To give him a chance, I prolonged my stay in London for upwards of a week, but to my surprise on my return he was still in possession of the place, and he had, so my housekeeper informed me, been making himself very much at home indeed.

"'He don't do nothing, sir, but eat and drink and sleep. He had his dinner just now, and directly after lay down on the sofa and went to sleep, and you will find him there now, I expect.'

"I looked into the dining-room, and there sure enough he was, snoring placidly.

"'This must be put a stop to, somehow,' I said to myself, and started off for a walk along the cliffs we saw just now to think things out.

"I halted when I got to the summit of the cliff where the fence is now; there was no fence there then, and

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taking off my hat I let the wind blow on my heated face.

"'I would not stand so near the edge if I were you,' said a voice behind me. I looked round; there he was.

"'Am I never to be free of your hated presence?' I exclaimed furiously.

"'That is for you to decide,' he said calmly.

"'Then jump over the cliff and have done with it,' I shouted, without thinking what I was saying.

"Without a moment's hesitation he advanced to the edge, and in another instant would have done my bidding. Frantically I clutched him by the arm and

*"I put down twenty sovereigns on the table."*

drew him back. I could not be a murderer. He made no more resistance than he had done when I pulled him out of the sea.

"In attempting to save him my foot slipped, and I felt that I, and not he, was in imminent danger of being dashed to pieces on the shingle below; as it was I fell over the edge of the cliff in its most precipitous part, and only the fact of my right hand coming in contact with a small shrub to which I clung with the tenacity of a drowning man clutching at a straw, saved me from a horrible death.

"The man whose life but a week before I had saved at risk of my own, stood above me looking on unmoved.

"'Give me your hand, for Heaven's sake!'

"In an instant he rose to the occasion, and with a presence of mind for which I should never have given him credit, lay down flat on the grass, and having obtained a good foothold by placing his feet behind the stem of a bush, stretched out his right hand, which I just managed to reach with my left, and then with a strenuous and almost superhuman effort rescued me from my perilous position.

"I must have fainted away I suppose, for the next thing I remember was finding myself a good way from the edge of the cliff, with my companion standing close by.

"'That was a near thing,' he said, in his habitual quiet tone of voice.

"'It was indeed; and I shall ever be grateful to you for having saved my life.'

"'Yes, I saved your life that time, I think.'

"'You did, indeed, and by Jove, that makes us quits, you know.'

"'Well, not exactly. You see you didn't want to throw your life away, and I did; still, I suppose as I saved yours it belongs to me, as mine does to you.'

"'Well, I don't want yours, and you don't want mine; let's exchange.'

"'But consider the difference in value yours is—'

"'Don't let that stand in your way. What do you say? Will a tenner equalise the matter?'

"'Make it twenty pounds and it's a bargain.'

"'Come back with me, and you shall have it at once,' I said, feverishly anxious to get the thing settled so easily."

"And did you?" I asked, as my host paused.

"I am pleased to say I did. On the way back neither of us spoke a word, but when I put down twenty sovereigns on the table—he liked gold better than a cheque, he said—he heaved a sigh of regret, and remarked in his quiet way, as he picked up the money: 'You have restored me my identity, sir, but believe me, I would willingly have allowed things to remain as they were, the quiet and repose of your hospitable establishment have been very pleasing to one whose lines have not been cast in altogether pleasant places of late. Let us hope there is a brighter future in store.'"

* * * * *

"And did you ever see him again?"

"No; and I hope I never may. A week was quite long enough."

S. J. F. Newbery.

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# IN THE DAYS OF SHAKESPEARE.

THE Thames three centuries ago had characteristics essentially differing from those that distinguish it in the present day. Gone are the palaces and gardens which from Whitefriars to Westminster adorned its banks; the six-oared canopied barge has given place to the smoky steamboat; in fact, everything has succumbed to the march of triumphant utility.

Things were not always so. As still, on the waters that wash the marble palaces of sea-born Venice, music nightly sounds, and love breathes his sigh, so, in the good old times that shall never come again, did the gallant, gliding over the unpolluted stream, woo his mistress.

The particular gallant whom we are about to describe, though on terms of familiar greeting with Essex, Raleigh, and the choice wits of the day, did not belong to the aristocratic class; yet on his person and bearing Nature's nobility was stamped. A conical hat with a single feather adorned his head, his doublet was slashed and of the finest broadcloth, his ruffles were of rich Flanders lace, and the hilt of his straight sword, a present from the Queen, was set with rubies. And this was the deerstalker of Stratford-on-Avon—Shakespeare.

The great dramatist was in the summer of his days. Love for an object, warm, breathing, living, had kindled its fires in his heart; to this lovely incarnation of all his poetic dreaming did Shakespeare, on the night in question, urge his wherry down the Thames.

Jessy was a daughter of the despised people who regard Abraham as their great progenitor. Her father was an usurer, and hung out his sign on the Old London Bridge. It was just above the third arch from the City side.

There were but two things in the world dear unto him—his money and his daughter. From her extreme loveliness Jessy had obtained the *sobriquet* of the "Beauty of London Bridge." Many of the illustrious of her tribe had sought her hand in marriage, but Jessy was deaf to each splendid overture.

Shakespeare's wherry glided on, and in a few minutes, having entered the deep shadow of the arch, he landed on the wide projecting starling. Jessy's sleeping apartment was far above; but the girl, unknown to her father, had the key of a lower chamber which opened on a small balcony; and thence, by means of a short ladder, she let herself down into the arms of her enamoured poet.

Shakespeare resigned his sculls to his attendant. The beautiful Jewess was wrapped in a velvet mantle trimmed with minever. Her large, dark, passionate eyes were now raised to the heavens, spangled with stars, and now fixed in melting tenderness on him who sat by her side. And thus they glided on.

"If thou dost love me," said Shakespeare, pressing the maiden's hand, "thou wilt never again enter the habitation of one who, harsh, bigoted, and cruel, is unworthy to call thee daughter. Flee with me this night! I will protect thee against a thousand fathers. This bosom shall be thy honour; thy love shall be my paradise."

"Not yet," said the girl timidly.

The moon had nearly set and a deep gloom was falling over the river. Jessy was anxious to return, and the wherry shot back to the bridge. As they approached, Shakespeare perceived the figure of a man standing on the broad starling beneath the Jew's residence.

"It is only a waterman, love; there, he is gone."

Jessy trembled, but the man had indeed disappeared round the buttress, giving them reason to believe that he was no other than the individual named. The beautiful Jewess was lifted by Shakespeare out of the wherry.

"Farewell, love! Forget me not," whispered the poet of Avon. At that instant Shakespeare started, for he felt his arm seized and compressed as in a vice by a sinewy hand, while words were hissed in his ear.

"Christian! dog! hound! Have I found thee?"

By a violent effort he flung the human viper from him, and as the setting moon shed a glimmering ray through the granite arch he recognised the father of his Jessy. The Jew waved his hand.

"Begone! thou disgrace to thy tribe! Thou reproach to thy father! Or I shall slay thee!"

The girl, shuddering and overawed, crept up to the little balcony, and in a few moments disappeared. The Jew seemed suddenly to have formed a resolution, and dashed forward, exclaiming:

"Unbeliever! contemner of the law of Moses! oppressor of our race! it will be no crime to send thee whither thou wouldst but go at last!"

"Old man, I woo thy daughter honourably."

"Son of Belial! Even thine honourable love would be infamy!"

With the quickness of thought he mounted to the balcony that projected over the starling and drew the ladder, by which he had ascended, after him. Shakespeare, although he divined not what the Hebrew's motive might be, waited the result of his action with anxiety. Presently he heard a faint cry like a supplication for mercy; then a shriek broke out on the stillness of the night. The father and daughter appeared at the topmost window which overlooked the Thames.

"Curses on thee and thy paramour!" exclaimed the Hebrew, dragging forward his struggling child. "Thou shalt not live to bring this disgrace on my name."

She fell. The Jew's flashing eyes marked his child sinking to the rushing waters far beneath; a fiendish exultation lit up his countenance, and he smoothed his beard and laughed. Shakespeare was filled with horror at what he had witnessed; he plunged into the stream to the rescue, but the tide which was flowing so rapidly had carried her throughthe arch. She floated now at a distance—sank again—the agonised swimmer reached her at length, and succeeded in placing her in his boat.

In desperation he conveyed her to the house of a medical man on the bankside; but every effort to effect resuscitation proved abortive: the light of life was quenched.

The bard knelt at the tomb of the once lovely Jewess. His poetic fancy heard her gentle voice in every passing wind, and the flowers that decked the turf seemed to breathe the perfume of her sign. In after time, when grief for her whom he had loved softened into a hallowed worship, he embalmed her memory in imperishable verse. The Jessy of Old London Bridge is the sweet Jessica in the *Merchant of Venice* and her diabolical father, unrelenting Shylock.

LE VIER.

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By PAUL ROPER.

# AN INSOLUBLE MYSTERY

ABOUT seventy years ago a young man of strong physique and prepossessing appearance arrived at New Orleans. He had come from New York, of which city he was a native, and had brought with him a considerable sum of money, supplemented by a letter of introduction to Judge Favart de Caumartin, who was then at the flood-tide of his fame.

Hepworth Coleman was rich, and what was perhaps a greater misfortune, he had no living kinsfolk for whom he cared or who cared for him. Practically speaking, he was alone in the world; moreover, he had an imagination. Scott's novels, Byron's poetry, the French romances, and I know not what else of the sort, had been his chief reading. For physical recreation he had turned to fencing and pistol practice. When I add that he was but twenty-two and unmarried, the rest may be guessed. Healthy, vigorous, full of spirit, he nevertheless had sentimental longings, as indefinite as they were persistent.

If it seems strange that he should have been attracted to New Orleans rather than to the Old World, we must remember what New Orleans was in 1820. No other city, not even Paris, could at that time compare with it as a centre of genuine romance. Nor was this romance unmixed with lawlessness of the most picturesque kind. Money poured into it from a hundred sources more or less illegitimate, beside the streams of wealth produced by cotton, sugar, and rice industries.

Hepworth Coleman had heard much of the gay city, of its warm, odorous atmosphere, its hospitality, its social charm, the smack of restless romance in all its ways. Somehow the desire to go there took hold of his imagination, and he went.

The letter to Judge Favart de Caumartin was given to Coleman by his banker, who, in handing it to him said:

"I don't know the judge personally, never saw him; but he has done a lot of business through us. He is very rich, evidently very influential, and certainly will be of use to you. I feel that I can take the liberty of sending you to him, because—well, he is under many obligations to the bank, and is likely to want many more large favours. I fancy that you'll find him a trifle eccentric, but enthusiastically hospitable. A creole of the creoles, I judge him to be, and a representative of the nabobs."

Young Coleman considered himself lucky to carry with him a document that would give him introduction to a person so renowned as Judge Favart de Caumartin, of whom he had been recently reading a good deal, owing to a duel fought between the judge and one Colonel Sam Smith, of the United States army, in which the latter had been killed. The duel had brought out history, from which it appeared that Judge Favart de Caumartin had fought before, not once only, but many times, and always to the death of his antagonist.

Along with these facts were disclosed numerous picturesque details of the judge's past life, with more than hints that in his young days he had been a pirate or something of the sort. The account also made the most of his wealth, his almost reckless liberality, his eccentricity, and, most of all, the air of mystery which still hung over his business operations.

All this was rich food for an imagination already thoroughly saturated with the spirit of romantic adventure, and during the voyage from New York to New Orleans, Hepworth Coleman found deep satisfaction in anticipating what he felt was in store for him. In every fibre of his frame he felt the assurance that he was on his way to new and strange experiences.

His banker had sent a letter to precede his arrival by a few days, asking a friend to secure suitable apartments for "Mr. Hepworth Coleman, gentleman," the consequence being that a dark young man, small, but well built and handsome, met him at the landing stage to conduct him to his suite of elegant rooms in Royal Street.

"Is you Meestu Coleman, sah?" inquired this young stranger in a musical tone of voice. "I look fo' zat ma' at Prayson."

"Yes, sir, that is my name," said Coleman briskly, at the same time showing by his look that he would like to know whom he was meeting.

"Varee glad you come, Meestu Coleman; varee glad, sah, indeed. Got your rooms all prepare fo' you, sah. Yes, sah, zey is beautiful and sharming rooms."

"Thank you; I am much indebted. Are you the gentleman to whom Mr. Cartwright, the banker, wrote in my behalf?"

"Nah, sah; not any banker write to me. I been tole to meet you at zis place at Prayson. Happy to see you, Meestu Coleman; varee happy."

There was a carriage at hand waiting for our friend. A negro driver in livery, and a small black footman stood by.

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Coleman entered the vehicle, followed closely by the young creole who had met him on the landing. He saw his baggage hoisted into a little waggon to come after the carriage.

For some reason not exactly explainable, this whole proceeding affected Coleman peculiarly. He felt a sort of vague uneasiness, as if he were passing into an air of mystery, if not of danger.

As he was whirled through the narrow streets he caught glimpses of queer tile-covered houses, with curious hanging galleries: high walls and gloomy courts flanked these, and here and there a dusky palm or a bright orange tree flung up its foliage. Blooming magnolia clumps filled the air with a heavy, languid odour.

But what most attracted the attention of Coleman was a company of four or five young men, dressed like dandies, swaggering along on one of the pavements, and singing a drinking song at the top of their voices. One of these hilarious fellows made a lasting impression on our young friend's imagination. He was a tall, olive-skinned, handsome man, apparently about twenty-five, strikingly dressed in a plaid coat, a vest of red and black velvet, grey trousers, and a profusely ruffled shirt.

Evidently he was the leading spirit of the party. At all events he was somewhat in front, with his black cap set well back on his shapely head, while his jet-black hair fell in shining curls over his strong shoulders. He was shouting forth the French drinking-carol in a voice as sweet as it was loud, and at the same time waving in the air a small cane. The entire group looked the worse for wine, their faces flushed and their eyes brilliant.

*"Varee glad you come, Meestu Coleman."*

"Who is that strange looking man in front?" inquired Coleman of his creole companion, as they passed them by.

"Zat ge'man ees ze Juge Favart de Caumartin," was the answer that fairly startled the interrogator.

Coleman actually grew red in the face and exclaimed: "That Judge Favart de Caumartin! Surely, sir, you are mistaken?"

"Beg pahdon, sah, zat ees Monsieur Juge Favart de Caumartin. I him know varee well myself at Prayson."

Coleman turned and stared back through the window at the strutting youthful figure leading the noisy rout.

How could that be the celebrated duellist, the mysterious pirate?

"It cannot be he," he muttered aloud. It is impossible."

"Varee well, Meestu Coleman," said the young creole drily; "but I mus' inqui' yo' pahdon, sah. Monsieur le Juge Favart de Caumartin ees to me well acquainted. I weemark to you, sar, zat zare ees not any mistake."

*The leading spirit of the party.*

"Oh, certainly, sir, I beg a thousand pardons!" exclaimed Coleman pulling himself together and seeing his breach of etiquette. "Of course you are right, but I was so surprised to see the judge looking so young. I had supposed that he was an aged man. I am astonished."

"Oh, Monsieur le Juge ees not so varee young—not so varee—hees hair not much grey."

While they were still discussing this matter the carriage stopped in front of a square, heavy-looking house, which, painted a dull red and projecting its upper gallery over the pavement, flung out on either side a heavy brick wall, on whose top was a jagged dressing of broken bottles and jugs. It looked more like a convent than a lodging-house.

Hepworth Coleman found his suite of rooms admirable in every respect; large, airy, luxuriously furnished. His creole conductor parted with him at the door without any explanation whatever of his connection with the matter of these elegant apartments or with making his arrival easy and pleasant.

Some silent and obsequious negro servants were at hand to do his bidding; but he soon dismissed them, while he flung himself upon a sofa and lit his pipe. Altogether incomprehensible to him were the suggestions of secrecy and mystery connected with his reception; scarcely less so was the youthful—nay, boyish—appearance of Judge Favart de Caumartin.

As if the mysterious atmosphere meant to continue growing denser, it was while he lay on the luxurious scarlet sofa, smoking, resting, and meditating, that a beautiful girl came and stood for a moment in the doorway of his chamber. She blushed sweetly at the sight of him, recoiled violently, and then slipped swiftly away, leaving behind her a rustle of fine stuff, a sparkle of rare jewels, and a lingering bouquet of violets and roses.

Coleman felt the delicious shock of her magnetic beauty thrill through him. A sort of shimmering outline of her form wavered, or appeared to waver, in the door after she had gone, so dazzling had been the effect of her fresh, pure, flower-like, yet intensely human beauty. He heard her feet tap swiftly and lightly along the hall. Involuntarily and with unpardonable curiosity, he sprang up, and hurrying to the door looked out; but she was not in sight. For the first time in his life he felt his heart beating unnaturally.

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Evening was drawing on, sending a soft twilight into the room, when Coleman's dinner was brought in by a shy and silent old coloured woman.

The moon was shining brightly when Coleman went forth for a short walk in the street. Not many people were abroad, it being the dinner hour; but certain cafés were crowded with men and women who were drinking champagne and discussing the dishes on well-spread tables.

At the door of one of these gorgeous rooms Coleman met the young man whom a few hours before he had seen leading the rout of singers in the street. It occurred to him that now was as good as any time to present his letter to the judge, so he forthwith stepped near him, and said, lifting his hat:

"I believe I have the honour of meeting Judge Favart de Caumartin."

The gentleman stared at him a moment very deliberately, then just a suspicion of a smile, and with a courteous dignity wholly inimitable and indescribable, doffed his queer little black cap as he spoke:

"And who does me the honour of addressing me?"

"I am Hepworth Coleman, of New York."

"Ah!"

"I hold a letter to you from Mr Phineas Cartwright, of the firm of Cartwright and Vanderveer, bankers."

"Indeed! I feel honoured."

Coleman produced the letter and tendered it, but not without a vague feeling of insecurity of some sort. He had not expected this peculiar reserve and caution on the part of the judge. Could it be that he was to be treated as an infliction to be borne for mere policy's sake? His distrust and doubt, however, were of short duration, for the judge had no sooner read the epistle, which was much longer than any mere letter of introduction, than his whole manner changed. He held out his hand.

"I am charmed, delighted, sir," he said with a slight creole accent that made his voice very pleasing. "I am proud to see you. I hope you find your rooms agreeable."

Coleman clasped his hand and felt that measure of relief which comes when one is suddenly lifted out of a very awkward situation.

The judge read the banker's letter over again with great deliberation, and apparently with much concentration of mind, while Coleman, who could not remove his eyes from his fascinating dark face, stood waiting for the opportunity to say:

"You do me infinite honour, judge, in quartering me in your own house. I had not expected, and could not expect, such hospitality."

The judge hesitated; then with a calm smile remarked that whatever he could do for so distinguished a visitor would be but a small expression of the greater hospitality that he would like to bestow were he able.

"And now," he presently continued, "come with me to my own private apartments, where we can have some quiet conversation and a smoke."

Coleman could not fail to see that the judge was still somewhat touched with wine, though the mood of wild hilarity had passed off.

They passed along the street until they reached a narrow blind alley, into which the moonlight fell but dimly between dusky walls.

To Coleman's surprise, the judge led the way into this, then up winding and rather rickety stairs to a dark hall, along which they passed for what seemed a great distance. At the end the judge fumbled for some time, and by some means opened a low, heavy door leading into a room that reeked with the odour of tobacco and the fumes of wine.

Passing across this by the light of a dim dormer window they reached a close passage-way which led them to another prison-like door which the judge managed to open after a great deal of trouble.

The room that they now entered was exceedingly small a mere cell in extent, as Coleman felt rather than saw, the walls, dam and grimy, being almost within reach on either hand.

*A beautiful girl came and stood for a moment in the door.*

"Stand here for a moment, please," said the judge, touching Coleman's arm, "until I call a servant."

Then he stepped briskly back through the doorway and drew the solid shutter to with a clang. Some strange echoes went wandering away as if from distance to distance, above, below, around, followed by absolute silence.

Coleman stood amazed for a few moments before going to the door, which he found immovable. He groped round the wall only to discover that there was no other outlet.

Judge Favart de Caumartin's residence was a large, rambling structure, more like a hotel than like a private house. Considering that his wife was dead, and that he had but one living child, a daughter of seventeen, it was strange that he kept up such an extensive establishment, in which perhaps twenty rooms stood richly furnished but unoccupied. It was his pleasure, however, and his pleasure was law.

That evening in the library the judge told his daughter that he had given a suite of rooms in the farthest corner of the mansion to a wealthy young gentleman from New York.

"I have had letters from my friend Mr. Cartwright, my banker there, asking me to take care of him, and this seemed the best I could do under the circumstances. I did not see my way to bringing him any nearer to us. We don't care to have another member added to the family, eh, Olympe, dear?"

Mdlle. de Caumartin blushed; she may have felt a touch of guilt because she could not muster courage to tell her father that she had already seen Mr. Coleman.

Mdlle. Olympe sat for a moment on his knee and stroked his long black hair.

"You will stay with me to-night, father dear," she presently murmured coaxingly; "you will not go out to-night."

"I must be gone a little while," he said, rising at once, "but just a little while."

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She clung close to him.

"Not this night, please," she urged, with a touching tremor in her voice. "Oh, you remember this night a year ago you had that dreadful adventure in the dark room. You must not go out; please, for my sake, do not."

An expert observer would have seen while this was going on a strange, half worried, almost fiercely-concentrated expression in the judge's eyes. It was as if he really wished to remain with his child, but could not by any effort resist some powerful temptation tugging at him and drawing him away.

He kissed her tenderly, pushed her gently from him, and went out.

The girl cast herself upon a sofa and buried her face in her hands, as a vision of that night one year before came up before her eyes.

Some strange masked men had brought her father home far in the night, white as a ghost, helpless, speechless, apparently dead. They put him down there in the room and vanished.

He had no wound, no bruise, no mark of any violence, but he recovered very slowly, and he never told what had befallen him.

A year had passed, and she might not have recalled the exact anniversary but for the prattle of an old servant, to the effect that she had seen her master, the judge, marching at the head of a company of masked men, himself wearing an "invisible" mask and a queer black velvet cap.

Mdlle. Olympe observed that her father was flushed, as if he had taken too freely of wine, and his bearing was indicative of some subtle and indescribable excite-

*The girl cast herself upon a sofa.*

ment within him. When he went away she felt that something startling was going to happen soon.

* * * * * *

When Hepworth Coleman suddenly found himself a prisoner in that close, dark room, he did not at first suspect any treachery on the part of Judge Favart de Caumartin. He expected that gentleman to return in the course of a few minutes; but this favourable impression was soon removed by certain startling events that crowded one upon another.

First, a low, rumbling, clanking sound, like the beating of metallic gongs in the distance, came through the walls and filled the cell; then as this died away to utter silence, he heard tumultuous whispering all round, above, below. The thousand voices all seemed to be saying the same thing, which presently he made out to be the words: "The Krewe is coming; make ready for the Krewe!" When the whispering ended little purple lights began to flash here and there, but so mysteriously did they twinkle that he could not locate them, and these were followed by phantom faces, wan, waxen, faintly luminous, appearing and fading instantly, succeeded by intense darkness.

Now, Hepworth Coleman was a man of iron nerve, an athlete in body and spirit, who, although full of romantic and poetic impulses, was in the depth of his heart as brave and steadfast as a lion; still, even the best courage has its moment of faltering, and just at the point when one whole wall of his cell was withdrawn, so that he stood in the full glare of twenty brilliant chandeliers that lighted a large, gorgeously-decorated hall, he felt the blood grow stiflingly heavy on his heart.

Before him stood a file of fantastic figures, men oddly clad and strangely armed, who clashed their brazen shields together and pointed their swords at his breast.

Coleman stood gazing while the file of armed men—perhaps platoon would be more correct—went through some silent but intricate evolutions, after beating their shields together and threatening him with their swords. When the movements were ended one of the maskers came up to him and struck him lightly with the flat of his weapon across the cheek, saying in a loud whisper:

"Beware! you are in imminent danger!"

Coleman took him at his word and instantly let go a blow from the shoulder. His close-set fist met the masker's jaw with a sound of crashing pasteboard, and down went the man outstretched at full length on the floor, his shield and sword giving forth a muffled clang as they crossed upon the soft carpet.

Quick as a cat Coleman leapt forward and picked up the sword, a beautiful rapier, and, assuming a defensive attitude, cried out boldly:

"Come one at a time and I will fight you all!"

The fantastic figures looked at one another with evident questioning, though not a word was said.

Meanwhile the fallen one scrambled to his feet and uttered two or three bitter French execrations. The leader rebuked him with gestures.

"Come one at a time you cowardly villains," repeated Coleman, "and I'll soon finish you all. Come on, the first one, if you dare meet a man!"

He was terribly angry, but his voice was steady and even.

There was a space of silence, then the leader said something to one of the men, who immediately cast aside his shield, and advanced with his rapier.

It was a short conflict. Coleman disarmed his antagonist with ease in less than a minute.

Another man came on and shared the same fate, with the addition of a prick through the wrist of the sword-arm.

This was exhilarating to Coleman in his exasperation at being made the butt of some mysterious trick.

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"Come next," he cried, "I want the best of you—and the best is a coward. Come on!"

Evidently the mystic band now felt the gravity that the occasion was assuming. The maskers looked to their leader.

"Don't stand there afraid," sneered Coleman; "come and get your turn. Who's next?"

One after another responded, only to fare badly. As yet, however, all had escaped without deadly hurt, when the leader himself made ready to fight. Those who had come to grief were quietly cared for by others, and all seemed to treat the proceedings as by no means startling or even unusual.

When the leader threw aside his shield and took off his tall plume-covered hat, Coleman was able to recognise Judge Favart de Caumartin more by his form and bearing than by any disclosure of his features.

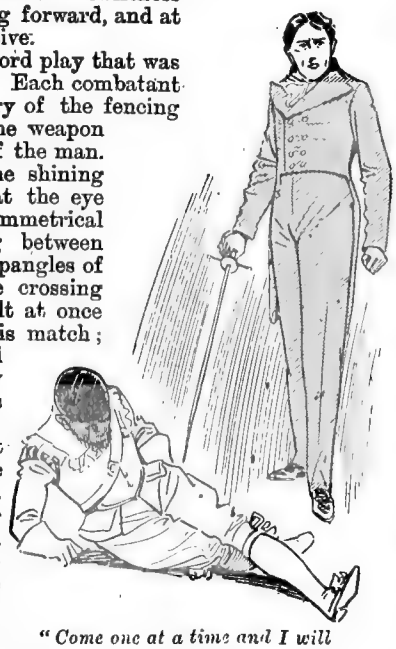
As the judge handled his rapier all the company of maskers, even the sorely wounded ones, came forward to look on with eager expectation. His was steel that never yet had failed to find the vitals of his opponent; but, on the other hand, there stood Coleman, steadfast and alert, the very picture of strength and will, the embodiness of quickness and certainty, his sword bearing at its point a tiny red clot of blood.

They looked with straining eyes, and did not feel sure of the result even with their captain as their champion.

"Come on, sir, and take your punishment, you cowardly leader of cowards!" exclaimed Coleman, in a most exasperating tone. "Don't stand their dreading it; pluck up a little nerve and come on!"

It is useless to say that Judge Favart de Caumartin needed no bullying of this sort to urge him into combat. With beautiful swiftness and grace he sprang forward, and at once took the offensive.

Then followed sword play that was amazing to look at. Each combatant showed that mastery of the fencing art which makes the weapon appear to be part of the man. So swiftly leapt the shining shafts of steel that the eye saw only fine symmetrical figures shimmering between the fighters, while spangles of fire leapt from the crossing edges. Coleman felt at once that he had met his match; the judge tingled with the discovery that here at last was a master.



*"Come one at a time and I will fight you all."*

From the first it was a fight to the death, if possible. Neither could hope to disarm the other, nor was there probability of any mere disablement ending the contest. The watchers, looking on in breathless suspense, heard with intensely straining ears the almost magically rapid clinking of the blades.

Coleman fought as if with the energy of all the accumulated romance of his recent experiences, half-recognising, as he parried, and thrust, and feinted, and recovered guard, the vivid picturesqueness, the melodramatic unreality, and yet the deadly intensity of the situation.

A fine glow of enthusiasm flashed, indeed, into his blood, and with it an excess of cunning, grace, and swift certainty of hand and eye.

All round him the vague spirit of dreamland seemed to hover, though the hideous pictures of skeletons and cadavers gleamed real enough in the glare of the chandeliers. What inspired him most, however, was the knowledge that he was trying his force with that of the greatest duellist in the world, and one that had always killed his man.

There was something more that gave spirit and courage to Coleman; he was, in some indirect way, remembering the beautiful girl who had appeared at the door of his room, and he half imagined that he was doing battle for the right to know more of her. Youth is a mystery in itself, and love knows no law of origin or of progress.

By some cerebral sleight, some trick of thinking under a thought, so to speak, Coleman was making a love dream keep time to the ringing strokes of his sword. A girl, whose name he did not know, whose voice he had never heard, was inspiring him as he strained every nerve.

As the combat proceeded the lookers-on saw that Coleman's play was new to the judge, who found great difficulty in meeting and parrying certain eccentric movements that invariably ended in a thrust of lightning quickness. Presently the judge tore off his mask with his left hand; he had to do this at the risk of his life, for he could not breathe freely with it on, but his great skill saved him even then; nay, more, it came near to giving him the victory. As Coleman lunged, the agile creole leapt aside and returned quickly with a wicked thrust that barely reached his adversary's breast, piercing it to the depth of half an inch.

Now the fight took on more of passion and less of grace, as if the men felt that it was to be a test of strength at last. Round and round, back and forth, this way and that, they leapt and recoiled and advanced, their faces—one dark and beautiful as a Southern night, the other fair and magnetic as a New England June day—fixed and staring, the white froth gathering on their lips.

When the end came it was like nothing ever before witnessed in a New Orleans duel. How it happened not one of the observers could tell, but the two men appeared to rush into each other's arms, and then it was seen that each had run the other through.

That broke the charm. The masked men sprang forward and separated the combatants and all began to talk at once.

Judge Favart de Caumartin and Hepworth Coleman were, by order of the judge himself, taken to the judge's mansion, where their wounds were examined by physicians and surgeons who were quickly summoned.

Mdlle. Olympe de Caumartin found herself nursing two almost dying patients at the same time. Although she suspected that this was the result of a duel between her father and the young stranger, she was not told the secret of the affair until long afterwards.

Strange to say, although the judge was much the older man, and was wounded much nearer the heart, he recovered and was walking about in his house before Coleman had even taken a turn for the better. The first

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thing he did was to order his daughter to cease her nursing of the young man.

"It is not proper," he said, "for a young girl to be the nurse of a man who is a stranger."

Mdlle. Olympe blushed scarlet, and was so confused that she could not find a word to say. It had been a great pleasure to her to wait upon Coleman, who, though for the greater part of the time quite insensible of her presence, seemed to respond better to her care than to the treatment of the doctors. She had been having her sweet dream, was in love with him, indeed, and the command of her father struck her like a blow.

Judge Favart de Caumartin suspected the truth about his daughter, and was not slow in making up his mind in the matter. He gave strict orders that the hall between Coleman's rooms and the rest of the mansion should be kept at all times locked and barred.

Love laughs at such precautions. Hepworth Coleman during his convalescence lay on his back and thought of nobody but Mdlle. Olympe, and when at last he was able to get up he sent for her. It so chanced that the judge, having got well in a measure, was gone up to Natchez on business.

Mdlle. Olympe did not go to see the young man, but she wrote him a very pretty note explaining her father's wishes.

*Mdlle. Olympe blushed scarlet.*

"But he has never forbidden you to come and see me when you are able to walk so far as the library," she added very frankly, "and I see no reason why you should stay away."

When the judge returned it was too late to interfere, as he soon discovered, and he had to bow to the inevitable.

The mystery of the adventure with the masked men in that secret hall has never been further explained. Judge Favart de Caumartin would not consent to his daughter's marriage until he had exacted a promise from Coleman that he would never divulge what he knew.

The truth was that Coleman knew very little. He tried to discover the blind alley into which the judge had led him on that eventful evening, but although he made many inquiries there was no such alley to discover.

The whereabouts of the mysterious hall cannot be pointed out to-day, although from that memorable Tuesday in the spring of 1820 up to the Mardi Gras of 1861, every anniversary of the Mystic Krewe has been duly celebrated by a fantastic band that at a certain hour of the night parades the streets of New Orleans. I do not refer to the regular carnival societies; these are but playful imitations of mystery and nothing further.

The genuine Krewe, as weirdly strange and mysterious as ever, may be seen only in Royal Street, a small band headed by a tall, slender, dark man, who wears an invisible mask and a quaint black velvet cap.

From what quarter they come nobody has ever been able to discover; who they are is not known even to the great Rex, the King of the Carnival. Their whole being seems to be enveloped in mystery.

Hepworth Coleman and Mdlle. Olympe de Caumartin were married in due time, and lived in Royal Street all their lives. Every year, on the evening of Mardi Gras, they were called upon to give a dinner to the Mystic Krewe, thirteen in number, who ate in silence with their masks on. The last of these dinners was in 1860. That year saw the twain, who, for forty years had been happy together, laid in their tomb side by side.

Strangely enough, there is no record whatever of Judge Favart de Caumartin's death; indeed, there is a tradition to the effect that it is he who still leads the Mystic Krewe.

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# THE LAMB AND THE LION.

I.

Whoever first bestowed the *sobriquet* of "The Lamb" on Peter Grey had a happy thought. It fitted him like a glove. Peter looked lamb-like, and his disposition did not contradict his face.

Indeed, but for Rosie Stallard, he might have carried his reputation for humility to the grave. She, however, lit the flame of love in his inoffensive breast, where it burnt so fiercely that his gentle nature was turned to steel, like iron in the Bessemer furnace.

Rosie was the belle of Allerton, a beauty, tall and graceful, but a desperate flirt. Peter admired her greatly, as a beggar might a princess; but he would never have got further than a casual greeting—they had long been slightly acquainted—had she not encouraged him.

One Sunday evening he found himself sitting next to her in church. She was without a hymn-book, so shared his. After the service she waited at the door to thank him. They walked home together, and thus it began. Several pairs of jealous eyes saw the couple, the news spread, and next day, at the workshop, banter, some of it barbed, descended upon Peter's head in showers.

"Take care, Peter," said Dick Pettifer, whom Rosie had jilted. "She'll be as sweet as best golden syrup for a week or two. Sugar-candy won't be in it till she takes up with somebody else, and then you'll find she's vinegar, and no mistake."

The warning made no impression.

"What's your number, Peter?" asked Dave Harden, who, perhaps by reason of his ugliness, had escaped Rosie's toils.

"What do you mean?" rejoined Peter, off his guard.

"Well, I've lost count. I can't recollect whether you're Rosie's ninety-ninth or hundredth victim."

But Peter could not be induced to open his mouth again.

At about the same time the subject was being discussed in Mrs. Stallard's front garden. Rosie was absent, of course.

"Peter's a steady lad," said the widow, who was inclined to be proud of her daughter's numerous conquests. "If she was to want to marry him, I shouldn't have no objection, as his sort always makes the best husbands; but I misdoubt she's only having a bit of fun, and she'll soon find him too quiet for her."

"And what then?" asked Mrs. Pettifer, who resented Dick's rejection as only a mother can.

"She'll get another. Gals like her need never be short of a sweetheart. And a broken heart or two against her won't spoil her appetite."

Mrs. Pettifer flared up on the instant.

"She didn't break my lad's heart. Anyhow, he hasn't took to his bed yet. The next time I see Peter Grey, I'll tell him what you've said. See if I don't!" And she bounced out of the garden.

She kept her word. But Peter only laughed. All the warnings, which were many, had no effect. He continued to walk out with Rosie. The girl's motive can only be guessed at. Perhaps Peter's humility amused her; possibly she was entertained by the metamorphosis in his appearance. Until he took up with Rosie, Peter had always patronised the unambitious village tailor, but very soon after that first Sunday walk he blossomed out into a very gay flower indeed. It might have been that she was unable to quarrel with him. When a youth is slow to take offence, no matter how grievous the slight, it is difficult for a girl to dismiss him.

They had been courting, or at least walking out together, about three months when "Craddock's World-famed Hippodrome and Wild Beast Show" chanced to visit Allerton. Very soon afterwards Rosie expressed a wish to go.

"I want to see Signor Kellini perform with the lions," she said. "I saw him on the top of one of the cars the day they came. He's just splendid!"

Peter was delighted. He wanted to ask a momentous question, and he thought if Rosie were pleased, that would be a very favourable opportunity. She had been rather cool for some days, in fact, ever since the arrival of the "World-famed Hippodrome."

Later on that evening, which happened to be Saturday, Peter dressed himself in his best and called at Widow Stallard's cottage. Rosie was ready. Soon both stood on the green, admiring the extraordinary pictures which adorned the front of the great booth. While they gazed a gigantic, jolly-looking man in red tights and spangles appeared on the platform in front of the tent, gave the big drum a tremendous whack, and commenced to address the spectators in a beautiful Irish brogue.

"Walk up, ladies and gintlemen! Su—r—re, an' it's the best show on ear—r—th ye'll see this noight for sixpence! Walk up!"

"That's him!" whispered Rosie. "That's Signor Kellini, the great lion tamer! Isn't he handsome?"

He certainly was a remarkably good-looking fellow. His black hair curled all over his head, and the ends of his waxed moustache almost reached his ears. But Peter did not share Rosie's admiration. Perhaps he felt the contrast between the giant's magnificent frame and his own rather puny figure.

"He has got a big voice," he said.

"Stupid!" muttered Rosie, "he's a splendid man."

At this juncture the Signor, whose wife addressed him as "Pat," and whose friends called him "Kelly," caught sight of his admirer and her sweetheart.

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"Arrah, Miss!" he cried. "If the bastes only see your bonny face, su—r—re they'll be pleasant and good-timpered for a week o' Saturdays. Don't be afther disappointing the crathurs, sorr. Walk up, an' bring the colleen. It'll be a mercy to 'em, bedad!"

"Yes, come on," said Rosie imperiously. And they ascended the steps.

When the booth was pretty full Mr. Craddock commenced the circus performance, which soon came to an end. Then a cage containing a lion and two lionesses was drawn into the centre of the ring. Signor Kellini entered at once and drove the animals over a bar and through a hoop in the approved style with shouts and pistol shots, finally bringing the show to a close by opening the lion's jaw and placing his curly head in the animal's mouth.

During this performance Rosie never once took her eyes from the lion-tamer. Her cheeks glowed with excitement. She stood almost breathless. And when the daring Irishman emerged from the cage amid a storm of applause, she turned to Peter and whispered:

"If ever I marry that's the sort of man I'll have for a husband."

Peter coloured and looked away. He certainly was not that sort of man. Being unable to think of anything pertinent to say, he held his tongue. But on the way home he asked her if she meant it.

"Of course I did," she answered.

A long silence followed.

"I've been thinking," said Peter, at length, "that it's about time I asked you if you'd have me. I suppose it wouldn't be any use?"

She laughed scornfully.

"Have *you?* Have a duffer"—that was the word she used—"like you? I should think not, indeed!" and she tossed her head. "You're all very well to walk out with, Peter, but when I marry, I'll marry a *man* like Signor Kellini."

What so many had prophesied had come to pass. Peter halted then and there.

"Good night, Rosie," he said without the least anger, and he left her, with her mocking laughter ringing in his ears.

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II.

ON Monday morning Signor Kellini was perched on the topmost step of his caravan, smoking a dudheen almost as black as his curly hair, when Rosie's rejected lover drew near.

"Good morning, sir," said the youth, in his respectful, humble way. "I should be very much obliged if you would tell me what would happen if a stranger was to go in among your lions?"

"H'what'd happen?" laughed the jovial giant. "Bedad! they'd ate him and look round for another soft tit-bit av the same sor-r-t."

Peter looked blank. "Are you quite sure?" he asked.

Signor Kellini glanced at him keenly.

"H'what are yez afther? H'what's yer game?" he demanded.

Peter hesitated. "I want to put the lions through their performance," he faltered at length.

Signor Kellini's roar of laughter might have been heard a quarter of a mile away.

"You! This bates Banagher! A little chap loike you? H'why—h'why—sure thin, if Marco looked at yez, ye'd fall in a faint an' die that minute!"

"Try me," said Peter resolutely; and there was an expression in his pale grey eyes quite new to them. The lion-tamer noticed it and ceased his chuckling.

"H'what is it ye're afther, anyhow?" he demanded again. "H'where have I seen yez before?"

"In the show, or outside, on Saturday night," said Peter.

"Sure, an' so I did—wid the purtiest colleen a man 'd wish to set eyes on. Bedad, now, if there isn't a petticoat at the bottom av this it's a raal Hitalian I am, an' not Pat Kelly at all. at all. Out wid it! Tell me h'why ye're wanting to do it."

Peter Grey told his story in few words, but not without hesitation. Its immediate result was a fit of laughter that surely put the lion-tamer's life in danger, for his neck was very short and thick.

"Marry a man loike me!" he roared. "Me! wid a wife an five childher! Och, wirras thru! If Kathleen heard her she'd tear her eyes out. Och, murther! Marry me—Pat Kelly! A colleen wid eyes like sloes, an' a figure as supple as an antelopes. Su-r-r-e, ye're dhraming!" And he roared again.

Peter waited until his laughter died away in a series of diminuendo chuckles.

"I thought if I showed her that I wasn't afraid of lions, either," he said, "she wouldn't be so scornful next time I asked her to have me."

"An' aren't ye afraid of lions?" demanded Signor Kellini.

"Well, she as good as said I wasn't a man, and I'd risk a lot to show her different."

"You've got the grit in ye, anyhow. Ye don't look it, but it's there. Put yer hand in this."

Signor Kellini extended his huge fist. Peter obeyed, though the giant's grip made him wince.

"Now," the lion-tamer went on, "I'll tell yez h'what 'd happen an' ye went into the cage alone. Marco would go for yez shtraight, an' if we got yez out aloive it'd be a miracle. If I went in wid ye it would be risky. Lions are loike ladies, an' strangers must be properly introduced. If I tell Craddock h'what ye're wanting, he'll jump at it. It would be good business for him, bedad. He'd send a handbill round, sure, an' half the folks in Allerton 'd come on the chance av seein' yez torn in pieces. But that wouldn't do for me. It's not Mr. Craddock, but meself would have to see yez through. H'what'll ye pay if I do it?"

"Five pounds," said Peter promptly.

"Done!" cried the lion-tamer. And they shook hands on the bargain.

"An' h'when 'll ye do it?"

"To-night, if you like," said Peter.

But Signor Kellini shook his head.

"That'd be certain death," he said. "Say next Saturday, an' come an' show yerself to the lions as often as ye can."

With that understanding they separated.

Mr. Craddock raised no difficulty. On the contrary, he lost no time in giving a printer an order for a thousand bold handbills. The printer, who knew Peter well, suggested the wording, with the result that all whom it might concern were informed that "on Saturday next, at 8.30 p.m., Mr. Peter Grey, a young gentleman well known in Allerton as 'The Lamb,' would enter a cage containing 'three full-grown Lions of the Desert' and assist Signor Kellini in putting them through their performance."

Great was the sensation. Great the amazement. A good many people were wholly incredulous.

"It can't be our 'Lamb'—our Peter Grey," they said.

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"He hasn't pluck enough to go into a cage o' rats, let alone lions."

A bill was delivered into Widow Stallard's hands. In great perturbation she showed it to Rosie.

"Look here, lass, Peter Grey's going into the lion's den at the menagerie. There isn't another Peter Grey in Allerton, as I knows on; besides, this one's 'The Lamb.' He must ha' gone mad."

The colour left the girl's cheeks, but she said not a word. As soon as she could, she went out and waited for Peter returning home from his work.

"You shan't do it!" she cried, pointing to the bill which she carried in her hand.

"I shall," said Peter.

"Then I'll never speak to you again."

"That won't be half so bad as what you spoke the other night," rejoined Peter desperately. "And if you speak *about* me you won't be able to say I'm no man."

"Don't do it," she pleaded. "Don't, Peter, for"—she hesitated—"my sake."

"I've made up my mind," said Peter doggedly, but in a softened tone. "Because I've quarrelled with nobody, and never wanted to fight, and have taken all sorts of foolish jokes in good part, everybody in Allerton seems to think I've no pluck. I'm going to show them different."

"But if the lions kill you everybody 'll say it was my fault," she urged.

"No, they won't," he answered; "for I haven't told a soul except Signor Kellini, and him I had to."

Rosie looked at her supposed poor-spirited lover in admiration. There was anxiety also in her expression, but admiration predominated. It was the first time he had seen such a look in her eyes, and it thrilled him. But his purpose remained unchanged.

"If I were to say I'd have you, Peter," she began, and paused. "If I were to say *that*," she went on, "and say as well that I'm very sorry for what I spoke on Saturday night, would you give it up?"

"No," he answered; "not now the bills are out." And he went his way.

Rosie returned home. For the first time in her life she had been repulsed. With a girl of her character years of devotion might have been less effective. The tables were turned completely. She, the scorner, now admired.

III.

THAT eventful Saturday night arrived. Half the population of Allerton had gathered on the Green, and one topic of conversation prevailed—the coming performance of "The Lamb" with the lions. It was not exactly the thing itself which caused the sensation; there was nothing particularly wonderful in it, and nothing new. But the man was Peter Grey. There lay the marvel.

By half-past seven the great tent was thronged. Rosie Stallard had come with her mother and a crowd of neighbours. She looked pale, but proud. All Allerton was talking about the man she had treated so badly, and she was quite prepared to consider his notoriety as homage paid to herself—at second hand.

Not that all were unanimous in approval. Some, the minority, said Peter Grey was a foolish young man, and the police ought to interfere; but by far the greater number were ready to pat him on the back and laud him as a hero. Human nature ran very strong in Allerton.

At 8.30 to the minute there was a great shout as Peter appeared in the ring, bearing a whip and a pistol, and followed by Signor Kellini, who carried an iron bar. The lion-tamer acknowledged the applause in the customary manner, but Peter looked neither to right nor left. With head thrown back, shoulders squared, lips tightly compressed, he led the way to the cage and waited.

Springing up the steps Signor Kellini entered the cage and admitted Peter. As the iron door clanged to, the lions leapt to their feet, and fixing their burning eyes on the stranger, lashed their tails angrily. A lioness tried to steal past the tamer, pressing her tawny body against the bars. It was a critical moment, but Signor Kellini sprang before her shouting, and she slunk back. Then the tamer fixed his bar in position, and Peter stepped forward amid dead silence to drive the lions over it. He cracked his whip. They refused to budge, but faced about, growling furiously.

"Shtrike—shtrike!" whispered the Irishman hoarsely, "or be jabers you'll be kilt dead!"

Realising that his life was in deadly peril, Peter laid about him in earnest. The lion, cowed, turned and leapt the bar, followed by the lionesses.

The shout of applause which greeted the termination of the first act was almost loud enough to rend the canvas roof.

An attendant passed up a hoop. Without removing his gaze from the furious animals Signor Kellini took it and gave it to Peter, whom he relieved of the whip and pistol. Standing in the middle of the cage Peter held the hoop level with his shoulders. The lion-tamer strode forward, brandishing his whip. One lioness leapt through the hoop, then the other. It was Marco's turn. He hung back, growling, for a moment, then sprang wildly, missed the hoop, apparently by accident, and fell on Peter, who went down as if he had been shot and lay still.

There was a loud, horrified "Oh!"—a woman's scream—then dead silence again.

Signor Kellini caught up the iron bar, and strode across to the insensible form of his too venturesome assistant. The lions fell back and stood glaring. But Mr. Craddock had entered the cage. He drew Peter out. The tamer followed, still fronting the lions. The show was over.

A doctor who chanced to be present examined Peter amid such a scene of excitement as had never been witnessed in Allerton, and declared him to be suffering from a broken arm and dislocated shoulder. Luckily, Marco had not drawn blood. For the first time in his life Peter was taken home in a cab.

It is no exaggeration to say that more people visited the Grey's cottage during the next week than had done so in all the years since it was built. Rosie was almost the first to call.

"I'm a bad, silly girl," she said, as she bent over Peter's bed, "but you'll forgive me, won't you?"

"Am I a man?" he asked.

"There's not a man like you in all Allerton," she answered, "nor a lover."

That was very satisfactory, of course.

They were married soon after Peter was able to get about.

For a long time, however, scarcely a day passed without some one asking Peter why he risked his life. Almost invariably his reply was: "You'd better ask Rosie."

But young Mrs. Grey kept her own counsel. She, however, had to bear a great deal of chaffing whenever Pat Kelly chanced to visit Allerton.

ASHMORE RUSSAN.

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# THE MASTER OF THE STEAM.

A ROUGH board shanty served as a railway station at Barranca, New Mexico. Within, the station-master was taking a siesta upon a couch draped with bright coloured Navajo blankets.

The station-master raised himself on his elbow. The face of an old Indian, seamed and wrinkled, was peering in the open doorway.

In good Spanish he asked to see the "head man" of the "iron-way." Then he told the object of his visit.

He was a chief of the Jicarilla Apaches, whose reservation was forty miles distant. He had heard his tribesmen tell wonderful stories of the great iron-way that the white man had made through the land, and of the fiery monster that flew along its trail. He did not believe all the tales they told. He had come to learn if these tales could be true.

It was almost time for the arrival of the express train on its way to Espanola. While awaiting its coming the station-master tried to explain to the Apache how the engine drew the carriages along the rails, but the old man either did not understand or did not believe him, for he shook his head and smiled incredulously.

"*Por Dios!*" ejaculated the savage, with a sudden start, as the shrill whistle of an approaching locomotive broke the silence, and in a moment more the "demon of the iron-way" came tearing round a curve with its four passenger carriages sweeping gracefully behind.

The old Apache took a position a safe distance from the line. Whatever his fears, he made a brave effort to master them. He was more than astonished—he was awe-stricken. He gazed with a bewildered expression at the great monster, now come to a stop at the station.

Down from the engine came the driver, a dumpy little fellow with a long-necked oil-can in his hand.

"*Santa Maria!*" gasped the savage nervously, clasping his hands, "the Master of the Steam!"

His eyes followed every movement of the driver; they shone with the light of adoration. So far as he knew, this was the only engine in the world, and this man the only master of it.

With two shrill whistles, which startled the Indian, the engine and its carriages glided out of the station and sped downward to the entrance to Embudo Cañon.

The Apache tarried with the station-master. He watched the train until a curve lost it to sight, and listened until its last echo died away.

Two weeks had passed, and the Apache had come again to see the "Master of the Steam." The station-master explained to him that the driver would not pass that day, but that he would go by in the night; that unless there were people to go in the carriages, "the steam" would not stop there at night. The savage without a word departed, slowly and sadly.

The moon shone full and clear on the New Mexico mesa, and the parallel bands of steel that marked the course of civilisation's roadway gleamed in the bright light. Above Barranca Station—almost within sight of it—was a small clump of trees, towards which two men were riding at a swift gallop. When they had arrived and dismounted one of them said:

"Climb that telegraph pole quickly, and cut the wire. there is no time to lose."

"We should have been here half an hour ago," said the first speaker. "I never got lost before cutting through the divide. Now take this crowbar and pry a rail loose; I'll swing the lantern, and if they don't stop we'll ditch 'em; if they do, why, they can fix the rail in a minute and go on."

"How much money do you think they've aboard?"

"I don't know exactly; there's $50,000 (£10,000) for the First National Bank of Sante Fé—that I know they've got, and that's enough for us if we get it."

The man who had received the order took the crowbar and approached the lines. He raised the bar and brought it down with force beside the rail. Just then there was a hissing, singing sound, as if some huge insect had suddenly flown towards them, and the man with the bar fell to the ground, full length across the lines. An arrow was buried deep in his breast.

It was a rash thing for his companion to do, but he was a desperate and an impulsive man. His six-shooter flashed in the moonlight. and he fired into the brush, in the direction from which the arrow had come. He listened intently. He heard a groan and started across the line. The shrill scream of a locomotive's whistle startled him. He stopped for an instant, and then started towards his horse. He grabbed the big pommel of his Mexican saddle to swing himself into the seat.

As he cleared the ground, the hissing, singing sound was repeated. An arrow grazed his leg and struck his horse in the stomach. With a snort the animal jumped aside, and the man fell heavily to the ground. The pained beast with the arrow in his side began to kick, and one blow from his heels fell upon the leg of the man. He uttered an imprecation and tried to gain his feet, but the effort was too great. His leg was broken. When he fell from his horse he dropped his six-shooter. He tried to crawl to where it lay, but the slightest effort made him cry out in agony.

The headlight of the engine added but little to the brightness of the scene as the great iron mogul came into view. The dumpy little driver was leaning out of the window. Suddenly he withdrew his head, reversed his engine, and applied the brakes.

"What's the matter?" asked the stoker.

"Man on the lines," was the laconic answer.

The injured man, with his revolver a dozen feet away, the dead man on the lines with an arrow in his breast, and a crowbar beside him, the lantern in the bushes, the picketed horse, instantly made clear the fact that a proposed train robbery had met with fatal interference. As the officials stood beside the injured robber, who refused to speak, a deep groan came from the bush on the opposite side of the line. They cautiously advanced in that direction. Lying behind a little clump of brush was an Indian. The breast of his cotton shirt was red with blood. In his left hand he clutched a stout bow and in his right hand was an arrow.

The driver bent over him and recognised him. It was the old Jicarilla Apache.

The light of recognition shone in the dying man's eyes. As the driver raised the Indian's head from the ground, a smile passed over the brown face of the savage. His lips moved:

"The Master of the Steam" he said, and died.

RICHARD LINTHICUM.

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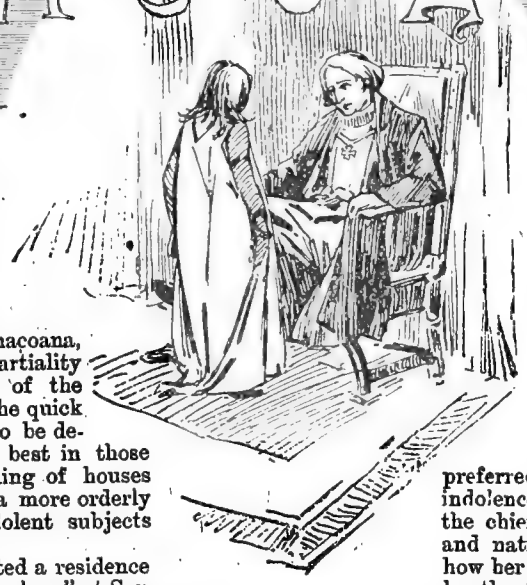
# ANACOANA



THE residence of some forty renegades among the simple natives of the fertile plain of Xaragua, to the west of Hispaniola, produced a marked effect on the mode of life of the untutored aborigines. Their chieftainess, Anacoana, actuated in part by a strong partiality for the manners and customs of the white strangers, and in part by the quick recognition of the advantages to be derived from adopting what was best in those manners, encouraged the building of houses like the Spanish domiciles, and a more orderly system of tillage than her indolent subjects had hitherto practised.

For herself she had constructed a residence modelled after the Governor's "palace" at San Domingo, with a fort attached, but unfortunately lacking in the same means of defence as the stronghold of the strangers. She dressed in the fashion of the Spanish women, too, and gave rich strings of pearls and gold utensils in exchange for gaudy garments, which she further ornamented with her favourite dyed feathers.

Anacoana was but a girl when Roldan and his disaffected followers revolted against Don Bartholomew, the brother of Columbus, whom the explorer had left as adelantado of the island, and who came among her father's people outraging the inoffensive and devastating their peaceful valley. Her heart was filled with hate for them, whether they might be gods or demons, and one or other men who could call down thunderbolts to strike their opponents dead must surely be.

But when Columbus returned to the island and restored tranquillity to the colony and relieved the unfortunate natives of most of their oppression, she accompanied her father on a visit to the "Great Chief." The sight of his gentle face or the kind words he spoke to her father softened her towards Columbus, and when he took her on his knee and told her of all the wonders of that other land so far away, whence he came, she was completely captivated, and for ever after during her life she cherished the memory of that one interview as sacred.

But about forty of the mutineers, gaol-birds, and adventurers, who left their country for their country's good, refused the amnesty offered by Columbus, and preferred to remain, leading the life of indolence which was made possible by the chief's having assigned them lands and natives to till it. Anacoana saw how her people were compelled to work by the Spaniards, and when she succeeded her father she exerted her authority to make the rest of the tribe labour for themselves.

Anacoana had been *cacique* for four years when she determined to pay a visit to the Spanish governor, Nicholas de Ovando, in the hope of inducing him to interfere and discipline the renegades, who were becoming more and more troublesome. When she entered the audience chamber, where the Knight of Alcantara sat in state to receive her, a murmur of admiration passed among the assembled officers, and even the eyes of the governor lighted up for a moment. Quickly remembering the dignity of his office, Ovando resumed the stern look he was accustomed to wear. Anacoana was then about twenty-four years old, tall and stately, her lithe figure moving with a native grace.

*She entered the audience chamber.*

Momentary as Ovando's glance of admiration had been it did not pass unnoticed by one interested spectator. This was Christina de la Rosa, Ovando's beautiful cousin, who occupied the seat of honour among the group of ladies in the audience chamber. A warm flush overspread her face, and if hate could kill, the swift glance she gave

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Anacoana would have struck her dead. Christina soon recovered her composure, and only the supercilious curling of her lip and a slight quivering of her nostrils betrayed her jealousy.

Ovando, beneath his expression of stern, unbending dignity, hid sensations which fully justified that jealousy. In turn his state and authority impressed Anacoana. Although he had not the kindly aspect of Columbus, he was immeasurably superior in her eyes to any of the men of her own race. As she advanced to the foot of the daïs, Ovando arose, and held out his hand for her to kiss. She bowed low and gracefully touched her lips to the great sapphire in the ring he wore as token of his authority.

When she raised her head again the colour in her face was deeper, her large, dark brown eyes glistened with a wild, passionate light, and a proud smile hovered about her mouth. In clear musical tones she stated the object of her visit, and cited instances in proof of her grievance. Ovando listened attentively, and when she had finished, stepped from the daïs, and taking her by the hand escorted her to a vacant seat on his right, while the head men who accompanied her presented further proofs of the rapacity and outrage of the renegades.

What pride was hers as she sat there in simple dignity! What jealousy raged in the heart of Dona Christina as she was forced to look upon this mark of honour to the beautiful barbarian!

Ovando promised to investigate fully the complaints. A strict disciplinarian, with a talent for holding in check the unruly adventurers who formed the rank and file of the Spanish colony, he desired only an opportunity to punish and bring to subjection the renegades in Anacoana's province.

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## II.

WHEN Anacoana and her suite had departed Ovando retired to the large apartment which served as parlour, library, and study. He had been there only a few minutes when Christina entered. So absorbed was he in thought as he sat at a table covered with books and papers, and so softly did she tread, that he did not notice her approach until her mocking laugh, as she peeped over his shoulder and discovered him tracing abstractedly a rude outline sketch of Anacoana's profile, recalled him from his reverie. With an involuntary movement he turned over the sheet of paper on which he had been drawing.

"You need not turn the page, my lord," she laughed, "since I already know the path your truant thoughts have taken."

Ovando frowned.

"What do you mean, Christina?" he demanded.

"What do I mean? The keen and penetrating Don Nicholas de Ovando, accustomed as he is to read men's minds himself, forgets that his own thoughts may also be read in his face—or in spite of it. I suppose the poor untutored savage queen, as she goes on her way homeward rejoicing, has before her mind the image of the great and grand Governor of Hispaniola and Knight of Alcantara just as he has her image before his eyes and tries to transfer it to paper. Yes, she has fine eyes, and is unusually pretty for a savage, but I never suspected that such charms could influence you in a matter of duty."

Ovando was furious, and his eyes flashed with rage.

"How dare you," he cried, rising. "impute an improper motive to me in your jealousy?"

Christina looked him straight in the face and did not flinch. She was somewhat pale, but her nostrils quivered with scorn.

"How dare I?" she asked. "How dare you in my presence play the gallant to this barbaric belle? How dare you add another indignity to the many you have heaped on me? Years ago you tempted me to fly my father's house to wed with you only to find no priest in waiting. To tempt me to this wilderness you vowed that once here, away from the world's scrutiny, you would make me your wife, and yet I am compelled to pose as your cousin. On every face I can see the scorn which the people dare not express, and I can almost hear the echo of their mocking laughter. And now a tawny savage has ensnared your fickle, treacherous heart, and you ask me how I dare to notice it.

Ovando raised his clenched hand threateningly, but Christina stood calmly and scornfully with curled lips still gazing in his bronzed and grizzled countenance.

"Ovando," she said in a suppressed tone. "You are not the passionate poltroon to strike a woman."

The Knight of Alcantara bit his lip, and his arm dropped listlessly by his side.

"You are right," he said, "it would be cowardice to strike you, however great the temptation. But do not attempt to dictate to me. If I look with lover's eyes on Anacoana, it is only a wife that has the right to object, and you have not that right."

"So you admit your infatuation and mock me! You forget how dangerous a woman can be. How long do you suppose the King would retain you in the Governorship of Hispaniola if I told my story?"

"Peace, peace," said Ovando. "Your jealousy needs curbing. I have only promised Anacoana that justice shall be done and that the renegades who are committing outrages against her people shall be punished."

"But you have not heard yet what they have to say. You cannot forget the cunning of these savage people, who are not notable for truth telling."

"No; I will do nothing till I have made a full investigation," said Ovando, "and then, pretty eyes, neither yours nor Anacoana's will influence me in seeing that justice is done."

"Strict justice is all I want, my lord; above all justice to myself."

With a low courtesy, Christina left the room.

Ovando lost no time in beginning his inquiry. One of his lieutenants was dispatched to the Spanish settlement in Xaragua, to report on the complaints of the natives. The reply of the renegades was a complete denial of the accusations, coupled with a counter-charge to the effect that Anacoana contemplated a treacherous descent on San Domingo and a massacre of the colony, and having failed to enlist the services of Roldan's former followers against their countrymen, desired to have them removed from that part of the island, so that her plans for the massacre could be completed without espionage.

This was pleasing information for Christina, as it was galling for Ovando. The idea of possible treachery on the part of Anacoana had never presented itself. On mature consideration of the state of affairs he was disposed to reject the report as malicious, and made in a spirit of revenge.

Christina soon learnt the result of the investigation, and was quick to appreciate how she could use it to her own advantage. She waited for several days to see whether Ovando would take any action, or speak to her concerning his lieutenant's report; but when he made

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no movement she shrewdly suspected that he either disbelieved what the renegades had said, or, from a motive which she understood, intended to await the course of events. Therefore, she perceived that it was necessary for her to speak, and that no time was to be lost.

It was in one of Ovando's moments of unbending. He lay stretched on a couch of Moorish workmanship, covered with heavy fur rugs, reading one of the popular Spanish romances dealing with knightly chivalry. Christina reclined on an ottoman at the other side of the apartment, her arms hanging loosely over the edge of the cushion, and the piece of lace which she had been engaged in working had fallen to the floor.

"Hernandez is returned," she said suddenly, "but my lord has not informed me what he reports."

Ovando looked up, somewhat disconcerted.

"It is unusual for you to take an interest in official matters," he said sharply.

"Oh, but you must remember that my interest in this particular affair was already excited," laughed Christina imperturbably.

"Your jealousy was also excited, I remember," said Ovando.

Christina started as if stung, and her olive skin flushed.

"And good reason there was for my jealousy," she cried, "when the harsh, unbending Nicholas de Ovando's thoughts were so completely captivated by the charms of a savage beauty."

Ovando ground his teeth.

"Hecate! Fury!" he hissed. "What do you want me to do?"

"Nothing but what you have sworn to your King and Queen to do—your duty."

"And my duty is——?"

"March to Xaragua and punish Anacoana and her people."

"But they have given no overt evidence of any intention to act treacherously."

"Are you going to wait for them to begin the massacre?" sneered Christina.

They were interrupted by the arrival of a messenger in such haste that his business could not wait. He was allowed to enter, and presented a dispatch to the governor. When Ovando read it, the expression on his face denoted that the contents were unpleasant.

"Say that I will give the matter instant attention," he said, dismissing the attendant. "And you," he said, turning to Christina, "leave me alone, I have important business to consider."

Christina retired silently. She knew what the important business was that required attention, for she herself had concocted the dispatch, which purported to give further details of the preparations being made by the Xaraguans to massacre the colony of San Domingo.

Ovando, though somewhat perturbed by the receipt of this information, determined to send spies to Anacoana's town and await more trustworthy news of the doings of the natives before marching against them. He foresaw that in pursuing this course he would experience a good deal of difficulty in dealing with Christina, but he was resolved to resist her threats.

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## III.

THE next day a messenger arrived from Anacoana bearing presents of gold and curiously wrought feather work, accompanied by an invitation to attend the annual native festival, which was about to take place. Christina smiled triumphantly when she heard of this.

"And what does my lord now think of these guileless children of nature?" she asked, entering his study.

"That the renegades are lying," he answered promptly.

Christina laughed aloud.

"Ovando was not always so unsuspecting," she said. "This is the first time that he was ever on the point of walking with open eyes straight into a trap."

*"That the renegades are lying," he answered promptly.*

But the Knight of Alcantara had no intention of allowing himself to become the victim of treachery, and made his preparations accordingly. When he set forth for Xaragua next day, seventy horsemen followed him. Christina rode on a palfrey by Ovando's side, and chatted merrily. All her ill-humour seemed to have departed, and she told the knight that the presence of the soldiers banished all her fears of treachery. The journey occupied six days, and as, towards sundown, the cavalcade sighted the orderly village, Anacoana came out to greet Ovando. She was attended by a score of maidens, each decked with flowers, and carrying great quantities of flowers to strew in the path of the Spaniards.

The chieftainess had the place of honour a short distance in front of her attendants, and danced not ungracefully a native dance of welcome, which consisted less in the movement of the feet than in the rhythmical swaying of the arms above her head, and a sinuous movement of her lithe body in unison therewith. At the same time Anacoana and the maidens sang in rude measure the praises of the Spaniards, their valour, and their mighty power.

The soldiers pitched their tents outside the village, but Ovando, Christina, and their personal guard of five were conducted to Anacoana's residence, and the chieftainess herself waited upon them until Ovando directed her to desist. She knelt as though she would have kissed his feet, but the Knight of Alcantara gently raised her up and kissed her on either cheek. Christina smiled, and gave the delighted chieftainess a similar salute.

Christina could not help noticing with what chivalrous tenderness Ovando treated Anacoana, and how plainly the chieftainess betrayed a passion, which she strenuously endeavoured to conceal. Still, the Spanish woman

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gave no sign of displeasure. On the morning of the third day Ovando was awakened by her from a heavy sleep, and told that a messenger had come to see him. The new-comer proved to be one of Bovadilla's men. When shown into Ovando's presence he knelt on one knee and said:

"Save yourselves, Excellency, while there is time. To-day the Spaniards are to be massacred, and last night Anacoana sent to ask us to assist her warriors to annihilate you."

"What nonsense to talk of treachery!" he cried. "Why, we could annihilate the village in half an hour, even if taken by surprise. I fear no treachery, and in the two days that we have been here nothing has occurred to cause any misgivings. This is to be the last day of our stay. If any danger threatened a signal is already arranged, and once it is given not a soul will be left of all the tribe. But no danger is likely to arise, and so the Spanish ensign will remain in its present position over the canopy."

The last words filled Christina's soul with joy. There was a signal, then, of terrible import.

That day was to wind up the native games, following which the Spaniards were to exhibit their agility, prowess, and military training. Simple indeed—foot-racing, wrestling and spear-throwing of Anacoana's people, but she was happy because Ovando took such interest in the games. A tender light filled her eyes, a light far different from that in Christina's, when she would discover the young chieftainess glancing with stealthy coyness at the Spanish Governor, and when so discovered the hot blood would suffuse her swarthy countenance and her bright eyes be veiled beneath the long silky lashes. And sometimes Ovando would glance at her, making no concealment of his admiration now.

The Xaraguan games were soon finished. Then came the turn of the Spaniards. They began with a military drill and went through the evolutions of the period with the skill of trained campaigners. The whole body formed into a double line, and at the word advance, running with such regular step that it seemed to be the movement of one man. Suddenly they broke ranks, and as sabres flashed and the nearest of the natives were cut down there was a wild cry from the panic-stricken Xaraguans.

Ovando himself was horrified. A glance round slowly showed him Christina standing with her hand on the rope which had hoisted the ensign and given the signal for massacre, her lips parted in a diabolical smile, and a look of murderous triumph in her eyes. Anacoana stood up, too, trembling in every limb, unable to articulate from terror and indignation. Ovando shouted a command for the massacre to cease, but his words were lost in that appalling din where the cries of murdered men, women, and children ascended to heaven for vengeance.

Christina released her hold on the rope as Ovando's eye fell on her. Worse than the tigress, because capable of a thousand times more mischief, her thirst for blood, so far from being satiated or assuaged, was only excited. Her hand sought her girdle, and the jewelled dagger which was drawn forth, was buried next moment in the heart of Anacoana. The body of the chieftainess sank at Ovando's feet, and not a murmur escaped her. Ovando seized Christina in his powerful grasp, while the massacre went on about him.

None was spared, the babe at its mother's breast, or those whom the grave already claimed as its prey. Nearly every Xaraguan wore one or more gold ornaments, and soon as the fatal blow was struck, the greedy murderers pillaged the dead of their glittering trinkets. It was the instinct of the Spaniard to do so. It was the greed of gold that first led them there. Ovando was unable to stay the murder and pillage now that it had begun, and he did not heed it longer. It was with Christina he had to deal.

As he held her blood-stained wrist he cried with a dreadful oath:

"Fiend incarnate, why have you done this?"

Her lip curled as she cast a look of hate on the corpse of Anacoana at their feet.

"Because she loved you—and you loved her," she replied.

With all his maddened strength he drove the dagger in her own clenched hand through her breast, and then flung the quivering body into the field. Then he glanced down on Anacoana where she lay lifeless. The fiendish look on his bronzed face relaxed and slowly melted into one of love and pity. The lip of him who had never blanched amidst the horrors of a dozen campaigns now trembled, and a slight sigh escaped him.

Then he knelt down and began to strip the body of its gold ornaments and jewels.

JAMES DUFFY.

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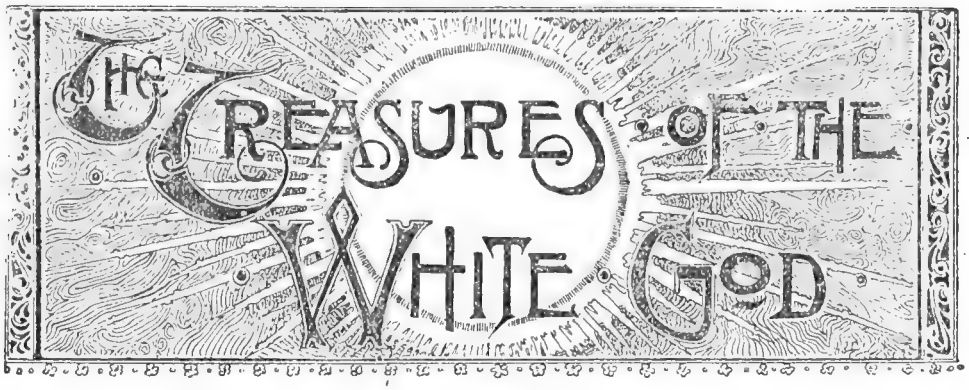


SUMMARY.

ROBERT LANE, escaped convict No. 407, *alias* Adrian Burgoyne is tracked to the World's Fair Grounds at Chicago. He is last seen, after an exciting chase by Mr. Inspector Grey and his assistant, Detective Dean, locked in a burning boat on the lake. Detective Dean finds a cipher in the convict's bed, which he sells to Mr. Richard Sheldon for £2,000. A Col. Lytle calls on Sheldon. They recall Burgoyne's history as follows: Ralph Ringold, when dying in Mexico, left a packet containing £6,000 in the hands of Burgoyne for his friend Richard Sheldon, whom he appointed guardian of his daughter Patrice's fortune. Burgoyne overheard Lytle and Sheldon arranging to appropriate the treasure, and threatened to expose them. They caused him to be convicted of a crime, and sentenced to penal servitude for life.

They then discovered, when too late, that he had with him in cipher the secret to Ralf Ringold's hidden fortune and treasures in Mexico.

The cipher is now in their possession, but Patrice Ringold has the key.

Adrian Burgoyne escapes from the burning boat. He meets with a severe accident, which disfigures him beyond identity.

Richard Sheldon visits Patrice to obtain the key to the cipher. This, however, she had dropped the day before on the cliff, with her Bible. She hastens off to find it.

She falls over the cliff, but is rescued by Adrian Burgoyne. Startled by the sudden sight of Col. Lytle, he himself loses his balance and falls. He checks himself, however, and discovers the lost Bible of Patrice.

## CHAPTER XII.

### PATRICE.

PATRICE RINGOLD! What did it mean? Could he believe his eyes? Fate, an omen, delusion? As the worn, hunted refugee traced the letters forming that name, he forgot who he was, what he had been.

Like a signal to a ship passing in the arms of the storm, a blaze of sudden light down a dark abyss, that name, a key to all he had guessed, marvelled over, surmised, seemed to illumine his heart—unlocked all the portentous mysteries of the past, bade him hope that light, solution, the truth, was to dawn at last.

He was transformed in the radiance it shed, in the strong reliance it offered. He rose to his feet, palpitating, revived. He was no longer the crushed convict, the beaten victim. There awoke in his thoughts the most extravagant soul of hope, and he murmured five gasping words, with a thrill of conviction, faith, and triumph.

"The hand of Providence—fate!"

Patrice Ringold! There was her name, this was her book. There could be no doubt of that. "From her loving mother." And its owner? With a memory of the thrill that had possessed his being as, hanging over the dizzy abyss at the cliff, her eyes met his own, he seemed to grope for some lost, long-past recognition. He knew the woman he had saved now!

"*His* daughter—the orphan child of my dead friend, Ralph Ringold," breathed Burgoyne fervently. "And I saved her life. Oh, fate sent me hither. The girl I have sought, dreamed of, longed to see—the child I was sworn to protect and cherish—I meet her here. In the hour of my resurrection from the dead, on the threshold of a new existence—what does it mean—a gleam of hope, a harbinger of success!"

He sat staring at the name. The rain had blurred it, the damp had already curved and injured the covers to the little Bible. As it began to dry out now, the pasted back cracked loose from the body of the book. The inside leaves alone were intact. Reverently and thoughtfully the dreamer placed them in his pocket, and toyed with and stared at the cover in his hand, as if the name written there had magic to fix his bewildered thoughts, and inspire them to mighty, decisive action.

An hour ago he had seen the shadow of the past loom over him again, a drawn sword of menace—had supposed that, in view of the proximity of Lytle, flight to the uttermost parts of the earth was his portion, his choice, his doom.

Now——

The instincts of courage, rectitude, resolve, strong in his earnest nature to heroism, awoke anew. To carry out the dying wishes of Ralph Ringold he had undergone peril, persecution; to preserve his secret he had become a martyr. All through his years of penal servitude one thought, one grim, bitter resolve, had buoyed him up with hope—a determination to escape, to avenge the wrongs of the dead, of the orphan against the human harpies who had robbed the one of his fortune, the other of her happiness and the comfort and wealth rightfully her own.

But when he had escaped; when he had realised how subtle were the groping hands of justice; how implacable and steadfast and secure in their strong, self-reliant position were his enemies; how futile seemed his efforts to prove aught hostile to them, to reach them, to dislodge, to unmask them; he had been almost content to abandon the unequal contest, to court recapture no longer, to redeem the wasted years for his own benefit, and forget the solemn trust he had tried to execute, and in so doing had met peril, persecution, and imprisonment.

But now! ah! the lost was found, the long quest was ended. She whom he had sought, she whom he had sworn to protect, was known. He had found Patrice Ringold—at last!

What did that mean? As he recalled the pathetic scene where Ralph Ringold had died in his arms, murmuring the name of his beloved child; as he remembered how he had promised to see every injunction regarding her faithfully carried out; as he thought of the plots of the unfaithful steward, Richard Sheldon, the man who had suffered for his convictions turned his face once more resolutely, dauntlessly, back towards the Calvary upon which his proudest hopes had been crucified.

Patrice!—she was everything. She had lost her rightful fortune; but what was wealth to peace, security, happiness? Better that she should go forth, as he was going,

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beggared, homeless, an outcast, than that she should remain in the power, under the shadow, of the cunning, the intrigue of the wolf, Sheldon, and his hyæna-like accomplice, Lytle.

Yes, his duty was plain. His pledge to the dead, and the influence of the bonny wild-rose face that had perforce nestled against his own the evening previous, spurred him on to vivid resolve. She should be found again—told all. She should be removed, as a brand from the burning, to a safe retreat. The blighting, hateful influence of those two heartless plotters should never shadow her purity of soul as it had blighted her prospects. That first—the girl safe, for she was menaced. Of that there can be no doubt; for was not the man who had addressed her as a friend her worst secret enemy—Colonel Lytle?

What were the present plots of the schemers. Why was Lytle here? Why were they not content with robbing the orphan, and condemning her to a life of poverty and obscurity?

These questions Adrian Burgoyne could not answer, but the points involved he determined to speedily learn.

"They appropriated her fortune," he mused; "they provided her with a humble home somewhere near here, as I have now learned for the first time; but why is that man Lytle here? Is some new plot against this trustful, innocent creature on foot? It must be so, or—ah! can it be that they have learned of my supposed death—that, failing to secure from me the secret concerning the hiding-place of the greater bulk of Ralph Ringold's fortune, they are hopeful of gaining some information from her? What matters it? They never will learn. I, and I alone, hold the secret. No matter what they design, no matter what complications exist, I must see Patrice; I must reveal the true villainy of these men to her. I must induce her to fly to a place of safety. Then——"

His pale face flushed, his eyes glowed like two scintillating sparks of light. Then?—aye! the debt he owed these ruffians should be paid to the very last farthing! The hidden fortune!—his should be the hand to unearth it—the stolen fortune! Wily as a serpent, cunning as a fox, implacable, tireless, he would yet run these scoundrels to earth and strip them of their pilfered trappings, and for golden chains of luxury exchange the grim, rusted iron bars of the baleful prison.

Justice! His soul cried aloud for it, but first, protection for the unprotected, safety for the innocent, a clear field, right pitted against might, a battle to the death, and, in the end, who knew? The Book promised it; light might break at eventide, and he might forget his money, as waters that pass away!

The man was inspired as he rose to his feet. Freedom, blessed boon! was his. Experience had taught him caution. Aimlessly, mechanically, crushing the distorted book cover in his hand, he rose to his feet, and prepared to leave the spot.

"To evade Lytle, if he really is on my track," he formulated rapidly; "to find the girl I rescued, Patrice Ringold; to reveal the truth to her, to induce her to leave the remotest proximity to her enemies——"

He paused, and drew back into his covert, as voices fell upon his hearing.

Crouching, he listened. Two men were passing along the fence outside.

"And had only trouble for our pains," one of them was saying.

"Eh? hardly; we was paid, weren't we?" demanded the other.

"Yes, but the fellow who hired us didn't make much out of the operation."

"You mean the Colonel, as he calls himself?"

"Aye. Seems to me he must think a deal of a simple book to have us searching up and down the cliff half the night—searching for a lost Bible."

"Well, I guess he's interested in the pretty young lady up at Mrs. Loring's cottage."

"Oh! Miss Ringold?"

"Exactly. It were her Bible that she lost he was so anxious to find. Mebbe he's spooney on her, and wanted to show her his devotion, and all that, by finding the book."

The two men passed out of hearing. With a poorly-suppressed cry of mingled relief and enlightenment, Adrian Burgoyne sprang from his covert.

"Oh, the good fortune of it!" he exclaimed jubilantly. "Lytle was not seeking for me at all. Those are the men he had with the ropes at the cliff. They were not looking for me, but for a book, and the girl was Patrice, and she is living at the home of a Mrs. Loring. I can find her readily. I am safe to appear publicly. But why should Lytle go to all the trouble he did for a little book—this very Bible, I am sure?"

Perplexed and thoughtful, Burgoyne stepped through the break in the fence, and walked down the path leading by it.

The two men had disappeared, and a short distance away he saw the spires and chimneys of the little town of Lynde.

Inspecting the coverless Bible, he turned its pages over and over, wondering if the little volume could have any particular value for Patrice or Lytle, save as a cherished memento by the former.

He placed it in his pocket, reflecting that its return to Patrice would pave the way for the interview he meditated. Then, just as he crossed the playground of a district school, he carelessly flung away the crumpled and wet cover of the Bible.

"My course is simple," he cogitated. "I must evade Lytle as much as possible. I do not think he would recognise me, but I must be very cautious. As to Patrice—ah! if it should be as the villager hinted, that Lytle is in love with her, that he has so imbued her mind with his respectability and friendly interest that she would not credit my story? No! no! I will not lose heart. Circumstances shall guide me. First, to find the home of this Mrs. Loring; then to see Patrice privately. From her I may be able to learn the status of the plot of Lytle."

Burgoyne entered the village, secured a meal at a restaurant, and arranged his disordered attire at a mirror.

He smiled confidently as he realised what fire and flood had done for him in the way of disguise, yet a slight twinge of regret afflicted his mind as he reflected, too, that his personal appearance was not of a grade likely to attract a young lady. He looked "peculiar"—that word just expressed it—and yet a thrill of satisfaction gave him new courage as he remembered that Patrice Ringold had not shrunk from him in that terrible clamber for life or death up the steep sides of the river cliff.

He was walking down the one business street of the town, when he turned his attention to a window filled with books, illustrated papers, and toys.

Just next door was a livery stable, and, engaged in conversation with its presumable proprietor, was the cause of Burgoyne's perturbation—Colonel Lytle.

The former had come almost face to face with him. In fact, as he halted, slightly dismayed, Lytle's keen eyes had swept face and form completely.

Under that dread cynosure the startled Burgoyne had trembled, but, with a powerful effort, he had turned to the show window, as if no deeper emotion than idle curiosity swayed his mind.

Had he been recognised—had the shrewd eyes of his enemy penetrated the mask of disguise?

No. The reflection of Lytle's face in the burnished window pane showed not a trace of surprise or intelligence. He was safe. Colonel Lytle adjudged him dead, and the change wrought by his recent adventures had given him an appearance entirely foreign to his original identity.

"You will have the carriage ready at ten, without fail?" Burgoyne heard Lytle say.

"Promptly."

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"Do not fail me. It is a matter of the greatest importance."

"At ten to-night, as you say, and a capable driver, equipped for a long drive."

"And a discreet one, who will appreciate double pay for keeping his ears shut and his eyes open," returned Lytle with a sinister smile, as he walked away.

At a safe distance Adrian Burgoyne shadowed him. His words had startled him. A carriage at midnight! What new plot was he contemplating?

Lytle proceeded to a cottage at the limits of the village, and near the river. Into it he vanished.

A few inquiries satisfied Burgoyne that it was the home of the girl he sought. More than that, he managed to engage a passer-by in general conversation, and deftly left the talk upon the subject of the inmates of the Loring cottage.

He learnt all he wished to know. Patrice had resided there for four years. A Mr. Sheldon, a reputed wealthy man, was a distant relative of Miss Ringold. He had never come to see her since sending her there. Out of sheer kindness of heart, he had provided for her. The Colonel was the man who had acted as his agent. This was his first appearance for four years in Lynde.

"Something is up," murmured Burgoyne convincedly, as he left the man and strolled on slowly. "What brings Lytle here just after my supposed death? What is the significance of the midnight carriage? How can I see Patrice? I dare not venture to the house; I must not arouse Lytle's remotest suspicions."

All through that day Burgoyne haunted the vicinity of the Loring cottage. Lytle came and went. Twice Burgoyne caught a fleeting glimpse of a fairy-like form flitting through the shrubbery, but ere he could get near enough to the grounds to make sure it was Patrice, the graceful presence had disappeared.

At dusk, however, he formulated a decisive plan. He felt sanguine that Lytle meditated some definite move that very night. Perhaps he intended removing Patrice to the city, to some more secluded and remote retreat. He must, he would, act within a few hours! Burgoyne was determined on that.

Dusk favoured a nearer approach to the cottage. He climbed the rear fence, and skirted the shrubbery in the garden, approaching the house cautiously and slowly.

It had a little wing comprising a single room. This apartment was used as a sitting-room, and here a light showed.

In its radiance he plainly made out the form of a man sprawling in an easy-chair, smoking a cigar and looking over some papers. It was Lytle.

In the kitchen Burgoyne discerned the mistress of the house, Mrs. Loring, putting away the supper dishes.

Where was Patrice? Anxiously the lurker scanned every window of the house; then he came round to its further side.

"Ah! it is she."

In a fervent gasp Burgoyne uttered the words, and, spellbound, fixed his eyes on a window not twenty feet distant.

It was open, and partially covered with a delicate trailing vine. A lamp set on a stand revealed the interior of an apartment typically suggestive of the calm, peaceful, pastoral life led by its inexperienced occupant.

The snowy bed, the bright, cheery wall paper, the countless ornaments formed of flowers, leaves and shells, the neat dimity curtains tied back with a bit of blue ribbon, formed a glowing framework for the radiant creature who stood at that moment braiding her beautiful tresses as the finishing touch to a toilet neat and becoming as her surroundings.

The heart of the watcher thrilled at the loveliness that spoke eloquently in lip, cheek, and eye. Purity, innocence, simplicity won his loftiest tribute. For her sake, though all unknown to her, he had suffered five years of awful torture. But she was worthy of it; he did not regret it, if only those sweet, sympathetic lips could tell him: "I thank you. I revere you for your fidelity to the father I mourn and love."

Patrice tucked away a stray lock under the silver band that held her tresses as in a crown. Then, extinguishing the lamp, she came to the window, sat down there, and gazed calmly out at the star-spangled heavens, as if waiting, in tranquil reverie, some expected summons from her guest in the best room of the humble little house.

Adrian Burgoyne took a step nearer to the open window. How could he speak without startling her? Would he be allowed an uninterrupted interview of sufficient length to tell her all?

Earth, air, and sky were in harmony with placid reverie, rather than dark, stormy disclosures. It seemed almost a crime to disturb the even, unbroken course of that peaceful and innocent life.

He drew nearer and nearer. He could make out her sweet, earnest face plainly in the half light of the holy, tranquil stars. He could catch her breathing faintly. From her filmy hair-ribbons and the lace garniture at her snowy throat an odour of solemn sanctity seemed to float and permeate that night of sweet sounds, swaying his senses in loving tribute to so much innocence and beauty.

Adrian Burgoyne was at the window now. He reached forth his hand gently. He allowed it to fall upon the white, snowy one of the fair dreamer, whose eyes, uplifted, seemed communing with the angels at the gates of Heaven.

"Patrice," he said softly—"Patrice!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

### The Dawn of Love.

The young girl uttered a quick, frightened cry, and shrank back timidly. Then something gentle though mandatory, persuasive though sudden, in the earnest clasp of the hand that rested across her own, checked the wild utterance of alarm arising involuntarily to her lips.

"Who is it?" she faltered. "I——"

"Do not cry out, I beg of you!" spoke Burgoyne agitatedly, in a low tone of voice, and gazing with apprehension towards the front of the house. "I have been waiting all day to see you, and——"

"Oh, I know you now."

The words burst unrestrainedly from the lips of Patrice. Interrupted, amazed, Burgoyne saw the beautiful face break into one radiant glow of ingenuous delight.

"You know me?" he repeated vaguely.

"Yes, oh, yes!" breathed his companion, with sparkling eyes, forgetting all her timid alarm, her true, womanly, sympathetic soul revealed. "Oh! my friend, my deliverer! Do you think I could ever forget? Do you think——"

She broke down there. More precious than the richest jewels to the longing, famished soul of the poor outcast, he saw the pearly teardrops, and his heart choked him with joy ineffable.

"I thought you were dead," she sobbed, but smiling. "Your sad end haunted me all day. I was praying for you here, just now. I was thinking of your noble sacrifice for me, an unknown girl, my brave deliverer—my friend, my dear, dear friend."

Patrice had sought his hand with both her own. She caressed it as might a sister. The flood gates of emotion were open, and she had not the art to dissimulate her true emotions.

"And you must come in now, at once. Mrs. Loring will want to see you, to thank you, and I—can I ever cease blessing you for what you have done for me?"

"Wait!" gasped Burgoyne, too overwhelmed until now to check the vivacious flow of gratitude. "Do not call anyone—do not speak so loud. My visit must be a secret one. Miss Ringold—Patrice—pardon me, but I must explain."

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She drew slightly away from him at his strange, impetuous words.

"Your visit a secret?" she faltered.

"Yes. Listen a moment. If I must be surreptitious, stealthy in my movements, there is a motive for it. I must speak to you here, now, at once, ere it is too late. No one must see me. Pardon the necessity of a clandestine meeting, but——"

"Do you think I mistrust you, blame you?" interrupted Patrice quickly. "No; only your strange words! What do they mean?"

He regarded her, his soul in his eyes. His voice quivered as he again addressed her.

"Patrice," he said, "you say I saved your life. If I place mine within your keeping—if I tell the woeful, shameful story for the first time to you of my broken, blighted life—if I disturb the calm, placid current of your happy young existence, will you forgive me and keep sealed lips?"

"I do not understand—I cannot comprehend!" stammered the girl, vaguely affrighted.

"Then, in a word I will explain. I dare not appear openly, because I am—an escaped convict!"

"You!"

Incredulity, shuddering distrust, lingered in the accents.

"Yes, more than that—a miserable, hunted fugitive; still more—the enemy, the victim, of the man who is your guest, your friend—nearer and dearer still, for all I know—Colonel Lytle."

His voice was almost a sob. The sad, direful necessity of the brutal revelation seared his soul.

With a shock the girl recoiled. The disclosure overwhelmed her.

"But—but innocent!" she gasped faintly. "Oh! I know you could not be a—a—*that!* You have suffered; your face tells me that. You are true, noble, manly. You are the man who saved my life!"

"And something more, Patrice," spoke Burgoyne impressively. "I am your dead father's friend; he died in my arms. He died imploring me to perform a sacred mission looking to your welfare. Listen."

She was silent now. So little of the sensational and startling had come into her life through the years of secluded girlhood that the overwhelming declaration of her strange visitor, gaining in force and intensity each moment, electrified, paralysed her.

In the eloquence of innocence vindicating itself, in the wild, pitiful accents of a martyr, a victim, Burgoyne spoke, and she listened. From first to last he told his tragic story. He saw her wonder-filled eyes glow, first with incredulity, and then slow-dawning confidence and trustfulness were succeeded by the luminous glow of filial affection and grief, as he depicted her father's sad demise. She shuddered at the sure revelation of the daring duplicity of Richard Sheldon and his ally; her face grew white as death over the recital of the cruel wrongs Burgoyne had suffered; she melted into womanly tears and true womanly pity as he told of the years of prison blight and torture.

"I believe you. For my sake, for my unworthy sake, you did all this? Oh! my friend, my deliverer!"

Her fair tresses swept his face as she clasped his hands in frantic emotion. Almost unmanned, he faltered. Then he implored her to calmness. The long but rapidly-told narrative was ended, her peril depicted, his plans of flight outlined.

The minutes had flown apace; a little clock inside had struck another hour. Still at the window he lingered, pouring into her ear the vivid story that seemed to awaken her like a shock from a peaceful, sunny dream.

Once, as the enormity of the crime of Richard Sheldon appalled her untutored senses, she seemed on the verge of fainting.

Once, too, at the thought of leaving her peaceful home and becoming a fugitive, an outcast, she shuddered.

A single realisation, however, of some sinister plot meditated by Lytle, a single glance at the earnest, resolute face of her champion, told Patrice Ringold that into his safe keeping she could trust her future, as to the watch and ward of her own brother.

It was strange, it was sudden, but so, evidently, too, would prove the next move of the plotters.

She listened with a wildly-beating heart to the revelation of Lytle's trickery. She must leave Lynde at once. She must not even bid her motherly friend, Mrs. Loring, goodbye. Burgoyne had sufficient money to convey her to a safe retreat. Then to formulate a plan for unmasking her enemies—for a search for the fortune hidden away in Mexico.

"I will come," she said, placing her hand confidingly in his own. "I am too stunned at all you have told me to act coherently. You must act for me. My father's friend, my rescuer, I place my life in your hands, and can only pray for you and bless you!"

Her eyes were swimming with pity for her wronged, forlorn champion.

"I think," she went on, more composedly at length, "that I can explain the object of this man Lytle's visit."

"You can?" murmured Burgoyne eagerly.

"Yes; in some way he or his employer has become possessed of a knowledge of the contents of the secret piece of parchment my father gave you—the cipher description of the hiding-place of his wealth."

"Impossible!" ejaculated Burgoyne.

"Then why did he come here to find the key?"

"The key?" repeated Burgoyne vaguely.

"Yes. He pretended when he came yesterday that he had discovered some old and useless documents among my dead father's papers. They wished to translate one of these. He asked me a number of mystifying questions, then he showed me a small piece of paper. Mr. Burgoyne, I am not mistaken. It bore the very same characters which you describe as being contained in the bit of parchment which you secreted through your long imprisonment—which Richard Sheldon so desired to secure."

Adrian Burgoyne looked worried, but he said with emphasis:

"It could not be; no one ever saw the parchment message, no one ever possessed it but myself—unless they have by accident stumbled over a copy of it, or—no! no! that secret is ours—ours alone; that secret is safe."

"And you still possess the parchment?" asked Patrice.

Adrian Burgoyne's face fell. He looked grave.

"No," he answered in a low tone. "I am sorry to say that I do not."

"Then——"

"I carried it for years. I had it safe in a bandage worn across my breast the night I was so nearly captured. That night I lost it. Falling off, sunk in the lake, destroyed by fire, given to the winds, of one thing I am certain—those knaves could by no possible circumstances have gained possession of it."

"But if you have lost it—the treasured, important clue to my father's hidden fortune," spoke Patrice earnestly—"how can you hope to ever find that wealth?"

"Do not fear," answered Burgoyne, with a mysterious smile. "I have provided against its loss."

"Ah, you have memorised the parchment message, then?" ventured Patrice, even amid the excitement and urgency of the moment betraying a woman's natural curiosity.

"No, I have—— But we must not waste time speaking of that now," said Burgoyne hurriedly. "There are more important themes to discuss. You were saying that Lytle asked you about a key to the cipher characters. You had one?"

"Yes." And Patrice explained that her father had been wont to correspond with her about the same.

"And the key you possessed?" queried Burgoyne eagerly.

"Was an alphabet that I had preserved. It was contained

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in my mother's little Bible. I kept it there—both mementoes of my dead parents."

"In the Bible?" exclaimed Burgoyne excitedly.

"Yes; I lost it, and this man Lytle was seeking to recover it all last night."

Burgoyne comprehended. In a flash his hand went to his breast pocket.

"I found that Bible when I fell over the cliff," he explained.

"You found it?" murmured the startled Patrice.

"Yes."

"Then you have it?"

"Here!"

Burgoyne produced the book in question.

"Yes," murmured Patrice, examining the Bible in the starlight. "It is the same book."

"And the cipher alphabet is somewhere in it?" queried Burgoyne excitedly. "I did not look through it, only casually. Oh! how fortunate. Find it, Patrice, quick! Then I can translate the message, and——"

"Why, Mr. Burgoyne!" faltered Patrice, "the cipher alphabet was written on a sheet of paper."

"Yes?"

"Folded up and secreted in a compartment in the back cover of the Bible."

Despite his caution, Burgoyne uttered a startled cry.

"In the cover?" he ejaculated in dismay.

"Yes. You found that, too."

"Yes, but the rain had soaked it and disfigured it. I threw the cover away."

"Threw—it—away!" gasped Patrice in a despairing tone of voice.

"Yes, never dreaming the truth. No! no! the loss is not serious, irredeemable. I remember distinctly where I cast it. I can certainly find it again."

"You think so?" murmured Patrice anxiously.

"I am positive of it, Patrice," spoke Burgoyne seriously. "We must waste no more time in talking now. I will hasten to the spot where I threw the Bible cover; will seek for it, find it, and return as speedily as possible. You will be ready then to accompany me?"

"Without fail," she replied staunchly.

"Where will I meet you?"

"At the little gate leading into the meadow."

"In one hour?"

"As you say. Wait one moment."

She extended a detaining hand as he was about to speed away on his mission.

Burgoyne came back to the window.

"What is it, Patrice?" he asked.

"If you find the alphabet——"

Still she hesitated, embarrassed.

"Yes?"

"And if it is really the key to the parchment message, you can translate it?"

"Most certainly."

"But you have lost the parchment?"

"That is true," admitted Burgoyne.

"Do you trust to your memory to recall the message?"

"No. You are curious, Patrice," smiled Burgoyne. "Well, I will tell you all. Fearing I might lose the parchment or be forced to destroy it, in order that it might not fall into the hands of Richard Sheldon I made a copy of it."

"A copy!" repeated Patrice, still curiously.

"Yes, an imperishable record," answered Adrian Burgoyne, a certain set, stern expression coming over his classic features.

"And you have that copy with you?"

"Always! It is here!"

As he spoke, Adrian Burgoyne described a singular movement. It was to extend one arm; with the other he bared it until the firm, sinewy member showed clear up to the elbow, white as snow, in contrast to the acid-stained hand and wrist.

Across the forearm was a legend in blue, indelible ink—an array of symbolic characters exactly similar to those contained in the famous parchment message.

"Tattooed there," exclaimed Burgoyne. "It was painful; it was a laborious task, but——"

Repaid? Oh, tenfold!—a hundred-fold repaid—for, the tears of pity and appreciation welling in her beautiful eyes. Patrice Ringold leant suddenly forward.

Her eyes gazed on the chronicle of pain and fidelity, as if her heart went utterly forth to meet his own, at this final evidence of his sterling courage and resolution.

"For my poor sake—all for me!" she sobbed. "Oh, my friend, my champion, my hero, *I adore you*!"

*(To be continued.)*


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